# Śrī Īśopaniṣad

*By His Divine Grace*

**A. C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPADA**

# 1

*īśāvāsyam idam sarvaṁ*
*yat kiñca jagatyāṁ jagat*
*tena tyaktena bhuñjīthā*
*mā gṛdhaḥ kasya svid dhanam*

## SYNONYMS

*īśa*—by the Lord; *āvāsyam*—controlled; *idam*—this; *sarvam*—all; *yat kiñca*—whatever; *jagatyām*—within the universe; *jagat*—all that is animate or inanimate; *tena*—by Him; *tyaktena*—set-apart quota; *bhuñjīthāḥ*—you should accept; *mā*—do not; *gṛdhaḥ*—endeavor to gain; *kasya svit*—of anyone else; *dhanam*—the wealth.

## TRANSLATION

**Everything animate or inanimate that is within the universe is controlled and owned by the Lord. One should therefore accept only those things necessary for himself, which are set aside as his quota, and one must not accept other things, knowing well to Whom they belong.**

## PURPORT

The Vedic knowledge is infallible because it comes down through the perfect disciplic succession of spiritual masters beginning with the Lord Himself. The Vedic knowledge is received from the

transcendental sources, and the first word was spoken by the Lord Himself. The words spoken by the Lord are called apauruṣeya, not delivered by any person of the mundane world. A living being of the mundane world has four defects, which are: 1. that he must commit mistakes, 2. he must sometimes be illusioned, 3. he must try to cheat others, and 4. he is endowed with imperfect senses. With these four principles of imperfection one cannot deliver perfect information in the matter of all-pervading knowledge. The Vedas are not known like that.

The Vedic knowledge was originally imparted into the heart of Brahmā the first created living being, and Brahmā in his turn disseminated the knowledge to his sons and disciples, who have continued the process down through history. The Lord being pūrṇam, or all-perfect, there is no chance of His being subjected to the laws of material Nature, while the living entities and inanimate objects are all controlled by the laws of Nature, and thus, ultimately, by the potency of the Lord. This Īśopaniṣad is a part of the Yajur Veda, and as such it contains information as to the proprietorship of all things that exist within the universe. This point is confirmed by the Bhagavad-gītā, in the Seventh Chapter, where parā and aparā prakṛti are discussed: The elements of Nature—earth, water, fire, air, sky, mind, intelligence and ego—all belong to the inferior or material energy of the Lord, whereas the living being, the organic energy, is the superior energy, the parā prakṛti, of the Lord.

Both the prakṛtis or energies are emanations from the Lord, and ultimately He is the Controller of everything that exists. There is nothing in the universe which does not belong either to the parā or the aparā prakṛti, and therefore everything is under proprietary right of the Supreme Being. The Supreme Being, the Absolute Personality of Godhead, being the complete Person, has the complete and perfect intelligence to adjust everything by His different potencies. The Supreme Being is often compared with fire, and everything—organic and inorganic—is compared with the heat and light of the fire. The fire distributes energy in the form of heat and light, and likewise the Lord displays His energy in different ways. And He remains the ultimate Controller, Sustainer and Dictator over everything.

He is full of all potencies, the Knower of everything, the Benefactor of everyone, and is full of all inconceivable opulences: power, wealth, fame, beauty, knowledge and renunciation. One should therefore be intelligent enough to know that except for the Lord no one is the proprietor of anything; one should accept only the things which are set aside by the Lord as his quota. The cow, for example, gives milk, but she does not drink the milk. Her milk is designated as food for the human being. The cow eats grass and straw but does not drink her own milk. Such is the arrangement of the Lord, and we should be satisfied with the things that have been very kindly set aside for us by Him.

We should always consider to Whom the things that we possess actually belong. Take, for example, our dwelling house,

which is made of earth, wood, stone, iron, cement, and so many other material things. If we think in terms of Śrī Īśopaniṣad, then we must know that we cannot produce any of the above-mentioned building materials ourselves. We can simply bring them together and transform them into different shapes by our labor. A laborer cannot claim to be the proprietor of a thing just because he has worked hard to manufacture it. There is always this great quarrel between the laborers and the capitalists in present- day society. The quarrel has now taken an international shape, and the world is in danger.

Men face one another in enmity just like cats and dogs snarling. Śrī Īśopaniṣad cannot give advice to the cats and dogs, but It delivers the message of Godhead to man through the bona fide ācāryas, or holy teachers. And the human race may take this Vedic wisdom from Śrī Īśopaniṣad: that no one should quarrel over material possessions. One must be satisfied by whatever privileges are given to him by the mercy of the Lord. There can be no peace if the communist or the capitalist or any other party claims to be the proprietor of the resources of Nature, which are entirely the property of the Lord. The capitalist cannot curb down the communist simply by political maneuvering, nor can the communist defeat the capitalist simply by fighting for the stolen bread.

If they do not recognize the proprietorship of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, then all the property they claim to be their own is stolen, and therefore they shall be liable to

punishment by the laws of Nature. The Bomb is in the hands of both the communists and the capitalists, and if both do not recognize the proprietorship of the Supreme Lord, it is sure and certain that, ultimately, the Bomb will ruin both parties. Therefore, in order to save themselves, both must follow the instruction of Śrī Īśopaniṣad, and thus bring peace to the world. Human beings are not meant for quarreling like cats and dogs. They must be intelligent enough to realize the importance of human life, and to realize the aim of human life.

The Vedic literature is meant for humanity and not for cats and dogs. Cats and dogs can kill other animals for food and for that there is no question of sin on their part. But if a man kills an animal for the satisfaction of his uncontrolled taste buds, he is responsible for breaking the laws of Nature, and therefore he must be punished. There is a standard of life for human beings which cannot apply to the animals. The tiger does not eat rice, wheat or cow's milk because it has been given its quota of foodstuff in the shape of animal food. There are many animals and birds who are either vegetarian or non- vegetarian, but none of them transgress the laws of Nature as they have been ordained by the will of the Lord.

Amongst the living beings—whether animals or birds or reptiles—there is strict adherence to the laws of Nature, and therefore there is no question of sin for them, nor are the Vedic instructions meant for them. Human life alone, then, is a life of responsibility. It is also wrong to consider that simply by

becoming a vegetarian one can save himself from transgressing the laws of Nature. Vegetables also have life. One life is meant to feed another living being, and that is the law of Nature. One should not be proud of being a strict vegetarian. The animals have no developed consciousness to recognize the Lord, but a human being is sufficiently intelligent to take lessons from the Vedic literature, and thereby know how the laws of Nature are working, and derive profit out of such knowledge.

If a man neglects the instructions of the Vedic literature, his life is very risky. The human being is therefore required to recognize the authority of the Supreme Lord. He must be a devotee of the Lord. He must offer everything to the service of the Lord and partake of only the remnants of foodstuff offered to the Lord. That will make him able to discharge his duty properly. In the Bhagavad-gītā the Lord directly states that He accepts the vegetable foodstuffs from the hands of a pure devotee. Therefore a human being should not only become a strict vegetarian, but he should also be a devotee of the Lord, and offer to the Lord all his food, and only then partake of the prasādam, or mercy of God.

Such a devotee can properly discharge the duty of human life. Those who do not do so are eating only sins, and thus will be subjected to the different types of distress, which are the result of the various sins. The root of sin is deliberate disobedience to the laws of Nature, through not recognizing the proprietorship of the Lord. Disobedience to the laws of Nature or disobedience to the order of the Lord will bring ruin to the human being. On the

other hand, if one is sober and knows the laws of Nature, without being influenced by unnecessary attachment or abhorrence, he is sure to be recognized again by the Lord, and thus become eligible to go back to Godhead, back to the eternal Home.

## 2

*kurvann eveha karmāṇi*
*jijīviṣec chataṁ samāḥ*
*evaṁ tvayi nānyatheto 'sti*
*na karma lipyate nare*

### SYNONYMS

*kurvan*—doing continuously; *eva*—thus; *iha*—during this span of life; *karmāṇi*—work; *jijīviṣet*—one should desire to live; *śatam*—one hundred; *samāḥ*—years; *evam*—so living; *tvayi*—unto you; *na*—no; *anyathā*—alternative; *itaḥ*—from this path; *asti*—there is; *na*—not; *karma*—work; *lipyate*—can be bound; *nare*—unto a man.

### TRANSLATION

**One may aspire to live for hundreds of years if he continuously goes on working in that way, because that sort of work will not bind him to the law of karma. And there is no alternative to this way for man.**

### PURPORT

No one wants to die, and everyone wants to live for as long as he can drag on. This temperament is not only visible individually, but also it is visible collectively in the community, society and nation. There is a hard struggle for life in every class of living entities, and the Veda says that this is quite natural for the living

being. The living being is eternal by nature, but due to his bondage in the material existence he has to change his body from one to another. This process is called transmigration of the soul. This transmigration is also called Karma-bandhana, or being bound by one's own work. The living entity has to work for his livelihood because that is the law of material Nature, and if he does not act according to the prescribed duties of his particular life, he transgresses the law of Nature, making himself bound more and more in the cycle of birth and death.

The cycle of birth and death is present in life other than the human form. When the living entity gets the chance for human life, however, it is his chance to get free from the chain of the law of karma. Karma, akarma and vikarma are principles very clearly described in the Bhagavad-gītā. Actions which are done in terms of the prescribed duties mentioned in the revealed Scriptures are called karma. Actions which make one free from the cycle of birth and death are called akarma. And actions which are performed by the misuse of one's freedom, thereby direct oneself toward the lower regions of life, are called vikarma. Of these three categories of activities, the one which makes one free from the cycle of further bondage to karma is preferred by intelligent men.

Ordinary men want to perform good work in order to be recognized and to achieve some status of life in this world or in heaven, but more advanced men want to be free altogether from the actions and reactions of work. Intelligent men know well that

both good and bad works are equally causes of the material miseries of life. They therefore seek to do work which will free them from the reactions of good and bad work. This freedom from good and bad work is ascertained herewith in Śrī Īśopaniṣad. The instruction of Śrī Īśopaniṣad is better explained in the Bhagavad-gītā, sometimes called the Gītopaniṣad, the cream of all the Upaniṣads. In the Bhagavad-gītā, the Personality of Godhead says that no one can attain the state of naiṣkarma or akarma without beginning the prescribed duties mentioned in the Vedic literature.

The Vedic literature can regulate the working energy of a human being in such a way that he can gradually realize the authority of the Supreme Being. When one realizes the authority of the Personality of Godhead, it is to be understood that he has attained the stage of positive knowledge. At this purified stage of life, where the modes of Nature—namely goodness, passion and ignorance—cannot act, one is enabled to work on the basis of naiṣkarma, or work which does not bind one to the cycle of birth and death. Factually, no one has to do anything more than to render devotional service to the Lord. In the lower stage of life, however, one can not at once adopt the activities of devotional service, nor can one completely stop reactionary work.

A conditioned soul is accustomed to working for sense gratification, for his own selfish interest, immediate or extended. An ordinary man wants to work for his own sense enjoyment, and when the principle of sense enjoyment is extended from the

individual to include the collective society, nation or humanity in general, it assumes various attractive names such as altruism, socialism, communism, nationalism, humanitarianism, etc. These isms are certainly very attractive forms of Karma-bandhana, the bondage of one's own work, but the Vedic instruction of Śrī Īśopaniṣad is as follows: if you actually live for any of the above isms, make them God-centered. There is no harm in becoming a family man, an altruist, socialist, communist, nationalist or humanitarian —provided all such activities are executed in relation with īśāvāsya, the God-centered conception.

God-centered activities are evaluated in the Bhagavad-gītā as being so rich that even a little bit of them can save one from the greatest danger. The greatest danger of life is to glide down again into the evolutionary cycle of birth and death. If some way or other a man misses the spiritual opportunity offered by his human form of life, and thus glides down again into the evolutionary cycle, it must be considered the most regrettable incidence, although foolish man cannot see this, due to his defective senses. Śrī Īśopaniṣad advises us, therefore, to exert our energy in the īśāvāsya spirit, and in that engagement we may wish to live for many, many years. Otherwise, one's long life is no better than that of a tree, which is also a living being, and which lives for hundreds and hundreds of years.

There is no point in living a long time like trees, or breathing like the bellows, or begetting children like the hog and the dog, or

eating like the camel. Even a humble life, with God-centered activities, is more valuable than the colossal hoax of so-called altruism or socialism without any relation to God. When activities such as altruism are executed in the spirit of Śrī Īśopaniṣad, every one of them becomes a form of karma-yoga, as is recommended in the Bhagavad-gītā. And that guarantees the executor against the dangers of the evolutionary process of birth and death. Such God-centered activities, even though half-finished, are still good for the executor, because they will guarantee him the human form of life in his next birth. In this way he can have another chance to improve his position on the path of liberation.

## 3

*asuryā nāma te lokā*
*andhena tamasāvṛtāḥ*
*tāṁs te pretyābhigacchanti*
*ye ke cātma-hano janāḥ*

### SYNONYMS

*asuryāḥ*—meant for the asuras; *nāma*—famous by the name; *te*—those; *lokāḥ*—planets; *andhena*—by ignorance; *tamasā*—by darkness; *āvṛtāḥ*—covered; *tān*—those planets; *te*—they; *pretya*—after death; *abhigacchanti*—enter into; *ye*—anyone; *ke*—everyone; *ca*—and; *ātma-hanaḥ*—the killers of the soul; *janāḥ*—persons.

### TRANSLATION

**The killer of the soul, whoever he may be, must enter into the planets known as the worlds of the faithless, full of darkness and ignorance.**

### PURPORT

A human life is distinguished from animal life on account of its heavy responsibilities. Those who are cognizant of these responsibilities and work in that spirit are called suras, the godly. And those who are either neglectful of the responsibilities or who have no information about them are called the asuras or demons. There are only these two kinds of human beings all over the

universe. In the Ṛg Veda it is stated that the suras always aim at the Lotus Feet of the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu, and act accordingly. Their ways are as illuminated as the path of the Sun. Intelligent human beings must always remember that this particular form of body is obtained after an evolution of many millions of years of transmigration of the soul.

This material world is sometimes compared with an ocean, and this human body is compared with a solid boat, designed to cross over the ocean. The Vedic scriptures and the ācāryas, or saintly teachers, are compared with the expert boatman, and the facilities of a human body are compared with favorable breezes, which can help the boat smoothly ply to the desired destination. If, with all these facilities, a person does not fully utilize his human life for self-realization, such an asura must be considered ātma-hana, a killer of the soul. The killer of the soul is destined to enter into the darkest region of ignorance to suffer perpetually, and here is a warning by Śrī Īśopaniṣad in clear terms.

There are swine, dogs, camels, asses, etc. whose economic necessities are just as important as ours. But the economic problems of these animals are solved under nasty conditions, while the human being is given all facilities for a comfortable life by the laws of Nature, because the human form of life is more important than animal life. And why is man given a better life than the swine and other animals? Why is a highly placed servant given all the facilities of comfortable life, rather than an ordinary

clerk? The answer is that the highly placed officer has to discharge duties of a higher nature. Similarly, the human being has higher duties in life than the animals who are engaged always in the business of feeding their hungry stomachs.

Yet the modern soul-killing civilization has only increased the problems of the hungry stomach. The modern soul-killing civilization has only increased the problems of a hungry stomach. We approach some polished animal, a modern civilized man, and he says that he wants to work for the satisfaction of the stomach and there is no necessity for self realization. But the laws of Nature are so cruel that in spite of his eagerness to work hard for his stomach, there is always the question of unemployment, even after denouncing the prospect of self- realization. We are given this human form of life not to work hard like the ass, the swine and the dog, but to attain the highest perfection of life.

If we do not care for self-realization, it is by the law of Nature that we have to work very hard even though we do not want to do so. In this age the human being has been forced to work hard like the ass and the bull, pulling carts. These are some of the examples of the regions where an asura is sent to work, revealed by this verse of Śrī Īśopaniṣad. If a man fails to discharge his duties as a human being, he is forced to transmigrate to the planets called asurya in the degraded species of life, to work hard in ignorance and darkness. In the Bhagavad-gītā it is also stated that the half-self-realized men who in their previous lives could not complete the process of approaching Godhead but had

sincerely tried for it—in other words, those who failed to attain success in realizing their relation with God—are given the chance of appearing in the family of śuci or śrīmata.

Śuci means a spiritually advanced Brāhmaṇa, and śrīmata means a Vaiśya, or member of the mercantile community. This means that such fallen candidates are given a better chance for culturing self-realization on account of their sincere efforts in past lives. If the fallen candidates are given the chance of taking birth in respectable noble families, we can hardly imagine the state of those who have completely achieved success in the attempt. Simply to make an attempt for realizing God is to guarantee that the next birth will be in a noble family. But those who do not make any such attempt at all, and who want to be covered by illusion, too materialistic and attached to material enjoyment, must enter into the darkest region of hell, as is confirmed in all the Vedic literature.

Such materialistic asuras sometimes make a show of religiousness with the ultimate aim of material prosperity. The Bhagavad-gītā, however, rebukes them as men called great on the strength of false perfection, empowered by the votes of the ignorant and by material wealth. Such asuras, devoid of self-realization and the conception of īśāvāsya, the Lord, are sure to enter into the darkest regions. The conclusion is that as human beings we are not meant only for solving economic problems on a tottering platform, but we are also meant for solving the

problems of the material life into which we have been placed by the conditions of Nature.

## 4

*anejad ekaṁ manaso javīyo*
*nainad devā āpnuvan pūrvam arṣat*
*tad dhāvato 'nyān atyeti tiṣṭhat*
*tasminn apo mātariśvā dadhāti*

### SYNONYMS

*anejat*—fixed; *ekam*—one; *manasaḥ*—than the mind; *javīyaḥ*—more swift; *na*—not; *enat*—this Supreme Lord; *devāḥ*—the demigods like Indra, etc.; *āpnuvan*—can approach; *pūrvam*—in front; *arṣat*—moving quickly; *tat*—He; *dhāvataḥ*—those who are running; *anyān*—others; *atyeti*—surpasses; *tiṣṭhat*—remaining in one place; *tasmin*—in Him; *apaḥ*—rain; *mātariśvā*—the gods who control the wind and rain; *dadhāti*—supply.

### TRANSLATION

**The Personality of Godhead, although fixed in His Abode, is more swift than the mind, and can overcome all others running. The powerful demigods cannot approach Him. Although in one place, He has control over those who supply the air and rain. He surpasses all in excellence.**

## PURPORT

The Supreme Lord, Who is the Absolute Personality of Godhead, is not knowable even to the greatest philosopher through mental speculation. He can be known only by His devotees through His mercy. In the Brahma-samhitã it is said that the nondevotee philosopher who can travel at the speed of the mind, or at the velocity of the air, and who can travel in space for hundreds of years, will find the Absolute still far, far away from him. As described in the Upaniṣads, the Absolute Personality of Godhead has His transcendental Abode, known as Kṛṣṇa-loka, where He remains, engaged in His Pastimes. But by His inconceivable potency He can simultaneously reach every part of the creative energy. In the Viṣṇu Purāṇa this potency is compared with the light and heat of the fire.

The fire can distribute its light and heat from one place, and similarly the Absolute Personality of Godhead, although fixed up in His transcendental Abode, can diffuse His different energies everywhere. Such energies are innumerable, but principally they are classified into three: the internal potency, the marginal potency, and the external potency. In each and every one of them, there are hundreds and millions of sub-headings. The dominating demigods who are empowered to have control over the administration of natural phenomena such as the air, light, rain, etc. are all classified within the marginal potency of the Absolute Person. The living beings, including humans, are also products of the marginal potency of the Lord. The material world is the creation of the external potency of the Lord, and the

spiritual sky, where the Kingdom of God is situated, is the manifestation of His internal potency.

The different energies of the Supreme Lord are represented everywhere by His different potencies. Although there is no difference between Him and His energies, still one should not wrongly conclude that the Supreme Lord, being thus distributed everywhere, has His Personal existence solely in the impersonal Brahman. Men are accustomed to reach conclusions only according to their own capacity to understand. But the Supreme Lord is not subject to our limited capacity to understand Him. It is for this reason that the Upaniṣads warn us: no one can approach the Lord by his own limited potency. In the Bhagavad-gītã, the Lord says that no one, not even the great ṛṣis and suras, can know Him. So what is there to say of the asuras, who are not even qualified to understand the ways of the Lord?

All these words mentioned in Mantra Four of Śrī Īśopaniṣad suggest very clearly that the Absolute Truth is ultimately the Absolute Person; otherwise there would have been no necessity of mentioning so many varied things in support of His Personal features. Individual parts and parcels of the potencies of the Lord, although having all the symptoms of the Lord Himself, have limited spheres of activities, and therefore are all limited. The parts and parcels are never equal to the whole. Therefore the parts and parcels cannot appreciate the full potency of the Lord. Foolish and ignorant living beings who are parts and parcels of

the Lord, under the influence of the material energy, try to make a conjecture on the transcendental position of the Lord.

Śrī Īśopaniṣad warns them not to make any mental speculation about the identity of the Lord. Try to know the Transcendence from the superior source of the Vedas, which is already in knowledge of the Transcendence. Every part of the Complete Whole is endowed with some particular energy to act, and forgetfulness by that part of his particular activities is called mãyã, illusion. Śrī Īśopaniṣad has therefore, from the very beginning, warned us that we should be careful to play the part designated for us by the Lord. This, however, does not mean that the individual soul has no initiative of his own. Because he is the part and parcel of the Lord he must have the initiative of the Lord as well.

Proper use of one's initiative, active nature, with intelligence to understand that everything is but the potency of the Lord, can lead one to the revival of his original consciousness, which was lost on account of association with mãyã, the external energy. All power is obtained from the Lord, and therefore each particular power must be utilized to execute the will of the Lord, and not otherwise. The Lord can be known by one who has adopted a submissive attitude. Perfect knowledge means to know the Lord in all His features, to know about His potencies and how such potencies are working by His will. These things are exclusively described by the Lord in the Bhagavad-gītā, which is the essence of all the Upaniṣads.

## 5

*tad ejati tan naijati*
*tad dūre tad v antike*
*tad antar asya sarvasya*
*tad u sarvasyāsya bāhyataḥ*

### SYNONYMS

*tat*—this Supreme Lord; *ejati*—walks; *tat*—He; *na*—not; *ejati*—walks; *tat*—He; *dūre*—far away; *tat*—He; *u*—also; *antike*—very near; *tat*—He; *antaḥ*—within; *asya*—of this; *sarvasya*—of all; *tat*—He; *u*—also; *sarvasya*—of all; *asya*—of this; *bāhyataḥ*—external to.

### TRANSLATION

**The Supreme Lord walks and does not walk. He is far away, but He is very near as well. He is within everything, and again He is outside of everything.**

### PURPORT

Here is an explanation of the Supreme Lord's transcendental activities by His inconceivable potencies. There are two sets of contradictory words mentioned herein to prove the inconceivable potency of the Lord. He walks, and He does not walk. These two phrases are contradictory. If someone can walk then it is improper to say that he cannot walk. These contradictions show the inconceivable power of God. With our limited fund of

knowledge we cannot accommodate such things, and therefore the Lord is conceived in terms of our limited powers of understanding. The impersonalist philosophers of the mãyã-vãda school accept only the impersonalist part of the Lord's activities, and refute His Personal feature. The Bhãgavata school, however, accepts the Lord in both ways, i.e., as Personal and impersonal.

And the Bhãgavatas also accept His inconceivable potencies. Without inconceivable potency there is no meaning to the words Supreme Lord. We should not take it for granted that because we cannot see God before our eyes there is therefore no personal existence of the Lord. To refute this sort of argument, Śrī Īśopaniṣad warns us that the Lord is far away from us, but He is very near to us also. The Abode of the Lord is beyond the material sky. We have no means to measure even the material sky. If just the material sky is so far, far away from us, then what of the spiritual sky, which is beyond the material sky altogether? That the spiritual sky is situated far, far away from the material world is further confirmed in the Bhagavadgītā.

But, in spite of the Lord's being so far away, He can at once, within less than a second, descend before us with a speed more powerful than the mind or the air. He can walk so quickly that no one can surpass Him. This fact has already been described in the previous verse. When the Personality of Godhead thus comes before us, however, we neglect Him. This negligence on the part of the foolish people is condemned by the Lord in the Bhagavad-gītā. The Lord says that the foolish deride Him, taking Him to be

one of the mortal beings. But He is not a mortal being, nor does He come before us with a body produced of material Nature.

There are many so-called scholars who say that when the Lord descends, He does so in a body of matter, just like an ordinary living being. Such foolish men place the Lord on a level equal to that of the ordinary man, not knowing His inconceivable power. Because He is full of inconceivable potencies, God can accept our service through any sort of medium, and He can convert His different potencies according to His own will. The unbelievers argue that the Lord cannot incarnate Himself, or if at all, He descends in a form of material energy. This argument is nullified if we accept His in- conceivable potencies as realities. Even if He appears before us in the form of material energy, it is quite possible for Him to convert the material energy into spiritual energy.

The source of the energies being one and the same, the energies can be utilized suitably according to the will of that energetic Source. For example, the Lord appears in the Form of Arca, or Deities supposedly made of earth or stone. These forms, engraved from wood or stone or any other matter, are not idols, however, as is held by the iconoclasts. In the present state of our imperfect material existence we cannot see the Supreme Lord on account of our imperfect vision. But still, those devotees who want to see Him by means of material vision are favored by the Lord, Who appears in so-called material form to accept the devotees' service. This does not mean that such devotees, who

are in the lowest stage of devotional service, are worshiping an idol.

In fact, they are worshiping the Lord, Who has agreed to appear before them in a particular way which is approachable by them. This Arca Form is not fashioned in terms of the order or whim of the worshiper. It is eternally existent with all Its paraphernalia. This can be actually felt by a sincere devotee, but not by an atheist. In the Bhagavad-gītā the Lord says that He treats His devotee in proportion to the degree of surrender made by the devotee. He reserves the right not to expose Himself to anyone and everyone, except those who surrender unto Him. Therefore, for the surrendered soul, He is always within reach, whereas for the non-surrendered soul, He is far, far away, and cannot be approached.

There are two words in the revealed Scriptures which are important in this connection: saguṇa and nirguṇa— with qualities and without qualities. Saguṇa does not mean that the Lord becomes subject to the laws of material Nature when He appears, although He has qualities and appears in the material form. For Him there is no difference between material and spiritual energies, because He is the Source of such energies. He is the Controller of the different energies, and as such He cannot at any time be under their influence, as we are. The material energy works according to His direction, and therefore He can use the material energy for His purpose, but without ever being influenced by any of the qualities of His energies.

Nor for this purpose does He become a formless entity at any time. Ultimately He is the eternal Form, the Primeval Lord. And the impersonal representation, or Brahman effulgence, is the glow of His Personal rays, as the Sun's rays are the glow of the Sun god. When the boy saint Prahlãda Mahãrãj was in the presence of his atheist father, his father asked him, "Where is your God?" The child Prahlãda replied that God resides everywhere. The father then angrily asked whether his God was within the pillar of the palace, and the child said yes. At once the atheist king broke the pillar in front of him into pieces, at which the Lord appeared as Nṛsiṁha (the half-man, half-lion Incarnation) from within the pillar, and killed the atheist king.

This means that the Lord is within everything, which is created by His different energies. And by His inconceivable power He can appear at any place in order to favor His sincere devotee. Lord Nṛsiṁha appeared from within the pillar not at the order of the atheist king, but by the wish of the devotee Prahlãda. An atheist cannot order the Lord to appear, but to show mercy to His devotee the Lord can appear anywhere and everywhere. The Bhagavad-gītā confirms this, in the statement that the Lord appears to vanquish the unbelievers and to protect the believers. To vanquish an unbeliever, of course, the Lord has sufficient energies and agents who can do the work, but to favor the devotee is a pleasing task for Him, and therefore He descends as an incarnation.

He does so only to favor His devotees, then, and not for any other purpose. In the Brahma-saṁhitã it is said that Govinda, the Primeval Lord, enters everything by His plenary portion. He enters the universe as well as the atom of the universe. He is outside in the Virãta Form, and He is within as Antaryāmī. As Antaryāmī He is witness of everything that we are doing, and He gives us the result of our actions as karmaphala. We ourselves may forget what we have done in previous lives, but because the Lord is the witness of our actions, the result of our actions is always there, and we have to undergo the reactions all the same. In fact there is nothing except God within and without.

Everything is manifested of His different energies, like the heat and light of fire, which means there is a oneness among the diverse energies. In spite of this oneness, however, the Lord enjoys in His Personal Form all that is enjoyable to the little senses of the little part and parcel living entities.

# 6

*yas tu sarvāṇi bhūtāny*
*ātmany evānupaśyati*
*sarva-bhūteṣu cātmānaṁ*
*tato na vijugupsate*

## SYNONYMS

*yaḥ*—he who; *tu*—but; *sarvāṇi*—all; *bhūtāni*—living entities; *ātmani*—in relation to the Supreme Lord; *eva*—only; *anupaśyati*—observes in a systematic way; *sarva-bhūteṣu*—in every living being; *ca*—and; *ātmānam*—the Supersoul; *tataḥ*—thereafter; *na*—not; *vijugupsate*—hates anyone.

## TRANSLATION

**A person who sees everything in relation to the Supreme Lord, and sees all entities as His parts and parcels, and who sees the Supreme Lord within everything, never hates anything, nor any being.**

## PURPORT

Here is an explanation of the Mahãbhãgavata, the great personality who sees everything in relation to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. There are three stages of realizing the presence of the Supreme Lord: The kaniṣṭha adhikārī, the person who is in the lowest stage of realization of the Lord, goes to one

place of worship, such as a temple, church, or mosque, in terms of his particular type of religious faith, and worships there in terms of the scriptural injunctions. Such devotees think that the Lord is there at the place of worship and nowhere else. Such devotees cannot recognize who is in what position in the devotional line, or in terms of realization of the Supreme Lord. They follow the routine formulas and sometimes quarrel among themselves, estimating one particular type of worship better than another.

These kaniṣṭha adhikārīs, in the lowest stage of devotion, are called materialistic devotees, or those just trying to transcend the material boundary to reach the spiritual plane. Next above these kaniṣṭha adhikārīs are the madhyam adhikārīs, the devotees who are in the intermediate stage of devotional service. These madhyam adhikārīs observe four principles in relation to the Supreme Lord, which are as follows: 1. They see, first of all, the Supreme Lord; 2. They see next the devotees of the Lord; 3. They see also the innocent, who have no knowledge about God; and at last, 4. They see the atheists who have no faith in the Lord, and who hate those in the devotional line. The madhyam adhikārī devotee behaves differently toward the different abovementioned four principles.

He adores the Lord, considering Him the object of love, and he makes friendship with those who are in the devotional line. He tries to awaken the dormant love of Godhead in the hearts of the innocent people, but he does not approach the atheists who

deride at the very Name of the Lord. Above the madhyam adhikāri there is the uttama adhikārī devotee, who sees everything in relation to the Supreme Lord. He does not make any particular discrimination between the atheist and the theist, but sees in every one of them the part and parcel of God. He knows that there is no difference between a vastly learned Brãhmana and a dog in the street, because both of them are of the Lord, though in different embodiments due to the different qualities of material action.

The Brãhmana particle of the Supreme Lord has not misused the little independence given him by the Lord, but the dog particle has misused his independence, and thus he has been punished by the law of Nature, being encaged in the ignorant form of a dog. Without considering the respective actions of the Brãhmana and the dog, the uttama adhikārī tries to do good to both. Such a learned devotee of the Lord is not misled by the material bodies of the Brãhmana and the dog, but he is attracted by the spiritual spark within the respective entities. Those who imitate an uttama adhikārī in terms of the sense of oneness or fellowship, but who behave in terms of bodily relationships, are false philanthropists.

Therefore the concept of universal brotherhood must be learnt from the uttama adhikārī devotee of the Lord, and not from a foolish person who has no proper vision of the individual soul and of the Supersoul—the plenary expansion of the Supreme Lord, Which dwells every where. In this mantra of Śrī Īśopaniṣad

it is clearly mentioned that one should observe, or see. This means one must follow the previous ãcãrya, the perfected Teacher. Anupaśyati is the exact Sanskrit word used in this connection. Anu means to observe. One should not try to see things as he does with the naked eye. The naked eye cannot see anything properly, due to its material defectiveness. One cannot see properly unless one has heard from a superior source.

And the highest source is the Vedic wisdom spoken by the Lord Himself. This truth is coming in disciplic succession from the Lord to Brahmã, from Brahmã to Nãrada, from Nãrada to Vyãsa, and from Vyãsa to many of His disciples. Formerly there was no necessity of recording the message of the Vedas because people of earlier ages were more intelligent and had sharper memories, and they could follow instructions simply by hearing once from the mouth of a bona fide spiritual master. At present there are many commentaries on the revealed Scriptures, but most of them are not in the line of Srila Vyãsadeva, Who originally taught the Vedic wisdom. The final, most perfect and sublime work of Srila Vyãsadeva is the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Which is the correct commentary on the Vedãnta-sūtra.

Similarly, there is the Bhagavad-gītā, Which is spoken by the Lord Himself and Which was recorded by Vyãsadeva. These are the more important of the many revealed Scriptures, and any commentary which does not conform to the principles of the Gītā or the Śrīmad- Bhāgavatam is unauthorized. There is complete symmetrical agreement between the Upaniṣads, Vedānta, the

Vedas, the Bhagavad-gītā and the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Therefore, no one should try to reach any conclusion about the Vedas without being instructed by members of the line of Vyãsadeva, or at least those who believe in the Personality of Godhead and His diverse energies. Only one who is already in the liberated status, according to the Bhagavad-gītā, can become an uttama adhikãrī devotee, and can see everyone or every living being as his own brother.

This cannot be seen by politicians who are always after some material gain. Imitation of this liberated status is to serve the outward body (for fame, or some such reward) but is not service to the spirit soul. Such imitators have no information of the Spiritual World. The uttama adhikãrī sees the spirit soul of an entity, and serves him as spirit, which includes matter automatically.

## 7

*yasmin sarvāṇi bhūtāny*
*ātmaivābhūd vijānataḥ*
*tatra ko mohaḥ kaḥ śoka*
*ekatvam anupaśyataḥ*

### SYNONYMS

*yasmin*—in the situation; *sarvāṇi*—all; *bhūtāni*—living entities; *ātmā*—the cit-kaṇa, or spiritual spark; *eva*—only; *abhūt*—exist as; *vijānataḥ*—of one who knows; *tatra*—therein; *kaḥ*—what; *mohaḥ*—illusion; *kaḥ*—what; *śokaḥ*—anxiety; *ekatvam*—oneness in quality; *anupaśyataḥ*—of one who sees through authority, or one who sees constantly like that.

### TRANSLATION

**One who always sees all living entities as spiritual sparks, in quality one with the Lord, becomes a true knower of things. What is there as illusion or anxiety for him?**

### PURPORT

Except for the two more advanced devotees described above, no one can correctly see the spiritual position of a living being. The living entities are qualitatively one with the Supreme Lord, as the sparks of the fire are qualitatively one with the nature of the fire.

But sparks are not fie as far as quantity is concerned. The quantity of heat and light present in the fire is not equal to the quantity of heat and light in the sparks. The Mahã-bhãgavata, the great devotee, sees oneness in the sense that everything is the energy of the Supreme Lord. And as there is no difference between the energy and the energetic, there is the sense of oneness. Without heat and light there is no meaning of fire, and yet heat and light from the analytical point of view are different from fire.

But in synthesis, heat, light, and fire are all the same one thing. The Sanskrit words found here, ekatvam anupaśyataḥ, mean to see the unity of the living entities from the viewpoint of the revealed Scriptures. Every individual spark of the Supreme Whole has almost eighty per cent of the known qualities of the Whole, but they are not as good as the Supreme Lord. These qualities are present in minute quantity, as the living entity is but a minute part and parcel of the Supreme Whole. This is like the drop of water and the ocean: The quantity of salt present in the drop is never comparable to the quantity of salt present in the complete ocean. But the quality of the salt present in the drop is equal in quality, in chemical composition, with that present in the ocean.

If the individual living being were equal both in quality and in quantity, then there would be no question of the living entity's being submerged by the influence of material energy. It has already been discussed in previous mantras that no living being,

even the powerful demigods, can surpass the Supreme Being in any respect. Therefore ekatvam does not mean that a living being is equal in all respects with the Supreme Lord. It means, in a broader sense, that there is one interest, just as in a family the interest of all the members is one. In a nation, although different individual citizens are there, the national interest is one. Therefore, the living entities being parts and parcels of the same Supreme family, the interest of the Supreme Being and that of the parts and parcels is not different.

Every living being is the son of the Supreme Being. As it is said in the Bhagavad-gītā, all living creatures, including birds, reptiles, ants, aquatics, trees, and so on, all over the universe—all are emanations from the marginal potency of the Supreme Lord. And therefore all of them belong to the same family of the Supreme Being. There is no clash of interest in spiritual life. The spiritual entities are meant for enjoyment. By nature, by constitution, every living being—both the Supreme Lord and each different part and parcel—is meant for enjoyment eternally. The living beings who are encaged in the material tabernacle are also seeking enjoyment always, but they are seeking their enjoyment on a platform which is not meant for them.

Aside from this material world, there is the spiritual platform where the Supreme Being is enjoying with His innumerable associates, without any trace of material qualities. That platform is called nirguṇa. On the nirguṇa platform there is no clash of enjoyment. Here in the material world there is always a clash

between different individual beings, because here the center of enjoyment is missed. The center of enjoyment is the Supreme Lord, Who is the center of the sublime and spiritual rãsa dance. We are all meant for joining Him, and for enjoying life with one transcendental interest and without any clash. That is the high platform of spiritual interest, and as soon as such a perfect form of oneness is realized there can be no question of illusion or lamentation.

Māyā, or illusion, means a Godless civilization, the result of which is lamentation. The Godless civilization sponsored by the modern politicians is always full of anxieties, and that is the law of Nature. No one can surpass this law, as is stated in the Bhagavad-gītā. Only those who surrender at the Lotus Feet of the Supreme Lord can overcome the stringent laws of Nature. lf, therefore, we wish to get rid of all sorts of illusion and anxiety and create unity of all diverse interests, we must bring God into all our activities. The results of our activities must be used to serve the interest of the Lord, and not for any other purpose, because only by serving the interest of the Lord can we feel the ãtma- bhūta interest mentioned here in Śrī Īśopaniṣad.

This and the Brahma-bhūta interest mentioned in the Bhagavad-gītā are one and the same thing: The Supreme Ātman, or Soul, is the Lord Himself, and the minute ãtman is the living entity. The Supreme Ātman or Paramãtman alone maintains all the individual minute beings, because the Supreme Lord wants to derive pleasure out of their affection. The father extends

himself by his children and maintains them in order to derive pleasure. If the children of the father are obedient to his will, family affairs will run smoothly with one interest and a pleasing atmosphere. Exactly the same thing is transcendentally arranged in the Brahman, or Absolute family of the Param Brahman, the Supreme Spirit. The Param Brahman is as much a Person as the individual entities are.

None of them are impersonal. Such transcendental personalities are full of transcendental bliss, knowledge and life eternal. That is the real position of spiritual existence, and as soon as one is fully cognizant of this transcendental position he at once surrenders unto the Lotus Feet of the Supreme Being, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. But such mahãtmãs, Great Souls, are very rarely seen, because such transcendental realization is achieved only after many, many births. Once attained, however, there is no more illusion or distress, no more of the misery of material existence, and there is no birth and death as we experience in the present status of our life. That is the information we get from this mantra of Śrī Īśopaniṣad.

# 8

*sa paryagāc chukram akāyam avraṇam*
*asnāviram śuddham apāpa-viddham*
*kavir manīṣī paribhūḥ svayambhūr*
*yāthātathyato 'rthān vyadadhāc chāśvatībhyaḥ*
*samābhyaḥ*

## SYNONYMS

*saḥ*—that person; *paryagāt*—must know in fact; *śukram*—the omnipotent; *akāyam*—unembodied; *avraṇam*—without reproach; *asnāviram*—without veins; *śuddham*—antiseptic; *apāpa-viddham*—prophylactic; *kaviḥ*—omniscient; *manīṣī*—philosopher; *paribhūḥ*—the greatest of all; *svayambhūḥ*—self-sufficient; *yāthātathyataḥ*—just in pursuance of; *arthān*—desirables; *vyadadhāt*—awards; *śāśvatībhyaḥ*—immemorial; *samābhyaḥ*—time.

## TRANSLATION

**Such a person must know in fact the Greatest of all, Who is unembodied, omniscient, beyond reproach, without veins, pure and uncontaminate, the selfsufficient Philosopher Who is awarding everyone's desire since time immemorial.**

## PURPORT

Here is the description of the transcendental and eternal Form of the Absolute Personality of Godhead. The Supreme Lord is not formless. He has His own transcendental Form Which is not at all similar to those of the mundane world. The living entities in this world have their forms embodied by the material Nature, and they work like any material machines. The physiological and anatomical structure of the body of a living being must have a mechanical construction, with veins and so forth in the embodiment. But in the transcendental body of the Lord there is nothing like veins. It is clearly stated here that He is unembodied. That means that there is no difference between His body and soul, nor does He accept a body by the law of Nature as we do.

In the material concept of bodily life, the soul is different from the gross embodiment and subtle mind. The Supreme Lord is apart from any such compartmentalized arrangement, however. There is nothing like a difference of body and mind in the Supreme Lord. He is the Complete Whole, and His mind and body and He Himself are all one and the same. In the Brahma-saṁhitā there is a similar description of the body of the Supreme Lord. He is described there as the sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha. This means that He is the eternal Form fully representing transcendental Existence, Knowledge and Bliss. The Vedic literature states clearly that He has a completely different kind of transcendental body, and thus He is sometimes described as formless.

This formlessness means that He has no form like ours, or that He is devoid of a form which we can perceive. In the Brahma-saṁhitā it is further said that the Lord can do anything and everything with any one of the parts of His body. It is said there that with each and every one of the parts of His body, such as the hand, He can do the work of the other senses. This means that the Lord can walk with His hands, He can accept a thing by His legs, He can see by His hands and feet, and He can eat by His eyes. In the Śruti mantras it is said that He has no hands and no legs like us, but that He has a different type of hand and leg, by which He can accept all that we offer Him, and walk faster than anyone anywhere.

These things are confirmed in this mantra of Śrī Īśopaniṣad by the use of words like omnipotent. The Lord's Śrī Vigraha, His worshipable form, Which is installed in the temples by authorized ãcãryas who have realized the Lord in terms of Mantra Seven, is also nondifferent from the Original Form of the Lord. The Original Form of the Lord is that of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Kṛṣṇa expands Himself by an unlimited number of Forms like Baladeva, Rãma, Nṛsiṁha, Varãha, etc.—and all of These are one and the same Personality of Godhead. Similarly, the Arcã-vigraha Which is worshiped in the temples is also an expanded Form of the Lord. By worshiping the Arcã-vigraha of the Lord, one can at once approach the Lord, Who accepts the service of the devotee by His omnipotent energy without any reproach.

The Vigraha of the Lord descends by request of the ãcãryas, the holy teachers, and works exactly in the original way by His omnipotent energy. Foolish people who have no knowledge of these mantras of Śrī Īśopaniṣad, or of any other Śruti mantras, consider that the Śrī Vigraha Who is worshiped by the pure devotees is made of material elements. To the imperfect eyes of the foolish people, or to the kaniṣṭha adhikārīs, this Form is considered material. But such people with little knowledge do not know that the Lord, being omnipotent and omniscient, can transform matter into spirit and spirit into matter, as He desires. In the Bhagavad-gītā, the Lord regrets the fallen condition of men with little knowledge, who regard the body of the Lord as material because He descends like a man into this world.

Such poorly informed persons do not know the omnipotence of the Lord. To the mental speculators, therefore, the Lord does not manifest Himself in fullness. He can be appreciated only in proportion to one's surrender to Him. And the fallen condition of the living entities is due entirely to forgetfulness of our relationship with God. In this mantra, as well as in many others in the Vedas, it is clearly mentioned: from time immemorial, the Lord is supplying. The living being first of all desires, and then the Lord supplies the object of desire in proportion to the degree of qualification. If a man wants to be a high court judge he must not only have acquired the necessary qualifications, but he must also depend upon the disposition of the authority concerned, who can award the title of high court judge.

Simple acquisition of the qualifications of a high court judge is not sufficient in order to occupy the post. This must be awarded by some superior authority. Similarly, the Lord awards enjoyment to the living being in proportion to his qualifications —in other words, by the law of karma. Those qualifications, however, are not sufficient without the mercy of the Lord. Ordinarily the living being does not know what to ask for from the Lord or what post to qualify himself for. When the living being knows his constitutional position, however, he asks to be accepted into the transcendental association of the Lord, in order to render transcendental loving service unto Him. Instead of asking for this, the living being under the influence of material Nature asks for many other things, and his mentality is described in the Bhagavad-gītā as divided, or splayed, intelligence.

Spiritual intelligence is one, but the opposite number is of many varieties. In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam it is said that persons who are captivated by the temporary beauties of the external energy forget their real aim of life, which is to go back to Godhead. Forgetting this, one tries to adjust things by various plans and programs, which are compared with the process of chewing already chewed refuse. But the Lord is so kind that He allows the forgetful living being to do so without interfering in his activities. If a living being wants to go to hell, the Lord allows him to do so without interference, and if he wants to go back to home, back to Godhead, the Lord also helps him to do that.

God is described here as paribhūḥ, the greatest of all. No one is greater than, or equal to Him. Other living beings are described here as beggars who ask from the Lord, and the Lord supplies their desirables. If other entities were equal to the Lord in potency, or if they were omnipotent or omniscient, there would be no question of begging from the Lord even for so-called liberation. The real liberation of the living being is to go back to Godhead. Otherwise, liberation as conceived by the impersonalist remains a myth, and the begging business for sense gratification has to continue eternally, unless the beggar comes to his senses and realizes his constitutional position. The Supreme Lord is self-sufficient.

When Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared on Earth 5,000 years ago He displayed the full manifestation of Godhead by His various activities. In His childhood He killed many powerful demons, and there was no question of acquiring such power by any extraneous endeavor. He lifted Govardhana Hill without any practice of weightlifting. He danced with the gopīs without any social restriction, and without any reproach. Although the gopīs approached Him with feelings of amorous love, the mixing of the gopīs and Lord Kṛṣṇa has been worshiped even by Lord Caitanya, Who was a strict sannyãsin and rigid follower of disciplinary regulations. To confirm this, Śrī Īśopaniṣad says that He is "antiseptic" and "prophylactic," pure and uncontaminate. He is antiseptic in the sense that even an impure thing in the estimation of the mundane world can become purified just by touching Him.

The word prophylactic refers to His association, and is mentioned in the Bhagavad-gītā. There it is said that a scrupulous devotee may appear in the beginning to be durãcãra, not well-behaved. Yet he is still to be accepted as pure because he is on the right path. That is the prophylactic nature of the Lord's association. The Lord is apãpaviddham, that is, nothing like sin can touch Him. Even if He may do something which appears to be sinful, such actions are all good, as there is no question of the Lord's being affected by sin. In all circumstances He is śuddham, most purified, often compared to the Sun. The Sun exacts moisture from many untouchable places of the earth, and itself remains pure. In fact it purifies obnoxious things by its sterilizing effect. If the Sun is so powerful, although only a material object, we can imagine the purity and strength of the All-powerful Lord.

## 9

*andhaṁ tamaḥ praviśanti*
*ye 'vidyām upāsate*
*tato bhūya iva te tamo*
*ya u vidyāyām ratāḥ*

### SYNONYMS

*andham*—gross ignorance; *tamaḥ*—darkness; *praviśanti*—enter into; *ye*—those who; *avidyām*—nescience; *upāsate*—worship; *tataḥ*—than that; *bhūyaḥ*—still more; *iva*—like; *te*—they; *tamaḥ*—darkness; *ye*—those who; *u*—also; *vidyāyām*—in the culture of knowledge; *ratāḥ*—engaged.

### TRANSLATION

**Those who are engaged in the culture of nescient activities shall enter into the darkest region of ignorance. Worse still are those engaged in the so-called culture of knowledge.**

### PURPORT

In this mantra there is a comparative study of vidyã and avidyã. Avidyã, or ignorance, is undoubtably dangerous, but vidyã, or knowledge, when mistaken or misguided, is even more dangerous. In modern human civilization this explanation of Śrī Īśopaniṣad is more applicable than at any other time in the past.

Modern civilization has advanced considerably in the matter of mass education, and yet the result is that people are more unhappy than before on account of too much stress on material advancement, without any taste for the most important aspect of life, the spiritual aspect. As far as vidyã is concerned, the first mantra of Śrī Īśopaniṣad has explained very clearly that the Supreme Lord is the Proprietor of everything, and forgetfulness of this fact is called ignorance.

The more a man forgets this fact of life, the more he is in darkness; and in view of this, a Godless civilization directed toward the so-called advancement of education is more dangerous than a civilization in which the mass of people are less advanced. There are different classes of men, called karmīs, jñānīns and yogīs. The karmīs are those who are engaged in the activities of sense gratification. Almost 99.9 per cent of the people in modern civilization are engaged in the activities of sense gratification under the flags of various activities such as industrialism, economic development, altruism, political consciousness, and so on. But all these activities are more or less based on the satisfaction of the senses, without any reference to the sort of God consciousness described in the first mantra of Śrī Īśopaniṣad.

In the language of the Bhagavad-gītā, people who are engaged in gross sense gratification are mūdhas—in darkness like the ass, the symbol of stupidity. People who are simply engaged in the pursuit of sense gratification, without any real profit in life, are

in the estimation of Śrī Īśopaniṣad worshiping avidyã. And those who play the role of helping this sort of civilization in the name of educational advancement are doing more harm than those who are on the platform of gross sense gratification. The advancement of learning by the Godless people is as dangerous as a valuable jewel on the hood of a cobra. The cobra decorated with such a valuable jewel is quite as dangerous as one which is not so decorated.

Again, the advancement of educational activities by a Godless people is, according to the Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya, a decoration for a dead body. In India as in many other countries, some people follow the custom of leading a procession with a decorated dead body for the pleasure of the lamenting relatives. In the same sense, modern civilization is a patchwork of activities meant to cover the perpetual miseries of material existence. Such activities are targetted toward sense gratification, but above the senses there is the mind, and above the mind there is the intelligence, and above intelligence there is the soul. Therefore, the aim of education should be self realization, realization of the spiritual values of the soul. Any education which does not lead to such a realization of life must be considered avidyã, or nescience.

And to culture such nescience means going down to the darkest region of ignorance. Such mistaken educators are known in the Vedic language by four names: 1. veda-vãda-rata, 2. mãyayã apahrta- jṣãna, 3. ãsuram bhãvam, 4. narãdhama. The

veda-vãda-rata people pose themselves as very learned in the Vedic literature, but unfortunately they are completely diverted from the purpose of the Vedas. In the Bhagavad- gītā it is said that the purpose of the Vedas is to know the Personality of Godhead, but these veda-vãda-rata men are not at all interested in the Personality of Godhead. On the contrary, they are fascinated by such results as the attainment of heaven. As is said in Mantra One of Śrī Īśopaniṣad, we should know that the Personality of Godhead is the Proprietor of everything, and we must be satisfied with our alloted portion of the necessities of life.

The purpose of the whole Vedic literature is to awaken this God consciousness in the forgetful living being, and the same principle is presented in various ways in the world's various Scriptures for the understanding of foolish mankind. Thus the ultimate purpose is to bring one back to Godhead. But the veda-vãda-rata people, instead of realizing the purport of the Vedas, take it for granted that side issues such as the attainment of heavenly pleasure for sense gratification— the lust for which is the very cause of their material bondage in the first place—is the ultimate end of the Vedas. Such people misguide others by misinterpreting the Vedic literature, and sometimes they condemn the Purāṇas, which are authentic Vedic explanations for laymen.

The veda-vãda-ratas make their own explanations of the Vedas, neglecting the authority of the great teachers, called

ãcãryas; and they tend to raise some unscrupulous person from among themselves as the leading exponent of Vedic knowledge. These men are especially condemned by this mantra of Śrī Īśopaniṣad with the very appropriate Sanskrit word vidyã-rata. Vidyã means Veda, because the Veda is the original in all knowledge; and rata means engaged. Vidyã-rata means engaged in the study of the Vedas. As such, the so-called vidyã-ratas are condemned here because they do not know what the purpose of the Vedas is, on account of disobeying the ãcãryas. Such veda-vãda-ratas are accustomed to finding meaning in every word of the Vedas to suit their own purposes.

They do not know that the Vedic literature is not a collection of ordinary books and cannot be understood except through the chain of disciplic succession. One must approach a bona fide spiritual master in order to understand the transcendental message of the Vedas. That is the direction of the Katha Upaniṣad. But these veda-vãda-rata people have their own ãcãrya, who is not in the chain of transcendental disciplic succession. Thus they will progress into the darkest region of ignorance by misinterpreting the Vedic literature, even more so than those who have no knowledge of the Vedas at all. The mãyayã apahṛta-jñāna class of men are self-made "Gods." Such men think that they are themselves God, and there is no necessity of worshiping any other God.

They will agree to worship an ordinary man if he happens to be rich, but will never worship the actual Personality of Godhead.

Such foolish men cannot recognize their own foolishness, regarding the question of how God can ever have been entrapped by illusion. If God were ever entrapped by illusion, then illusion would be more powerful than God. But they also say that God is all-powerful. If God is all-powerful, then how can He be overpowered by illusion? The self-made Gods cannot answer all these questions very clearly, but they are satisfied that they have become God themselves.

## 10

*anyad evāhur vidyayā-*
*nyad āhur avidyayā*
*iti śuśruma dhīrāṇāṁ*
*ye nas tad vicacakṣire*

### SYNONYMS

*anyat*—different; *eva*—certainly; *āhuḥ*—said; *vid-yayā*—by culture of knowledge; *anyat*—different; *āhuḥ*—said; *avidyayā*—by culture of nescience; *iti*—thus; *śuśruma*—I heard; *dhīrāṇām*—from the sober; *ye*—who; *naḥ*—to us; *tat*—that; *vicacakṣire*—explained.

### TRANSLATION

**The wise have explained to us that one result is derived from the culture of knowledge, and it is said that a different result is obtained from the culture of nescience.**

### PURPORT

The culture, of knowledge can be practically conducted in the following way, as is advised in the Bhagavad-gītā (Thirteenth Chapter). There it is said that: 1. One should become a perfect gentleman himself, and learn to give proper respect to persons other than himself. 2. One should not pose himself as a religionist simply for name and fame. 3. One should not become

a source of anxiety to others by the actions of his body, mind or words. 4. One should learn forbearance, even if there is provocation from others. 5. One should learn to avoid duplicity in his dealings with others. 6. One must have a bona fide spiritual master who can lead him gradually to the stage of spiritual realization, and to such an ãcãrya or spiritual master he must submit himself with service and relevant questions.

7. One must follow the regulative principles enjoined in the revealed Scriptures, in order to approach the platform of self realization. 8. One must be fixed up in the tenets of the revealed Scriptures. 9. One should completely refrain from practices which are detrimental to the interest of self realization. 10. One should not accept more than what he requires for the maintenance of the body. 11. One should not falsely identify himself with the material covering of the gross body nor consider as his own those who are related with his body. 12. One should always remember that so long as he has a material body, he must face the miseries of repeated birth, death, old age, and disease.

There is no use in making plans to get rid of these miseries of the material body. The best thing is to find out the means by which one may regain his spiritual identity. 13. One should not be attached to more than the necessities of life required for spiritual advancement. 14. One should not be more attached to wife, children and home than is ordained in the revealed Scriptures. 15. One should not be happy or distressed in regard to the desirables and undesirables created by the mind. 16. One

should become an unalloyed devotee of the Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and serve Him with rapt attention. 17. One should develop a feeling for residing in a secluded place with a calm and quiet atmosphere favorable for spiritual culture, and thus avoid congested places where the non-devotees congregate.

18. One should become a scientist or philosopher, and make research into spiritual knowledge—not material knowledge—recognizing that spiritual knowledge is permanent, whereas material knowledge ends with the death of the body. These eighteen items form a gradual process for developing real knowledge. Except for these eighteen items, all other items whatever are grouped within the category of nescience. Śrila Bhaktivinode Thãkur, a great ãcãrya, said that all the forms of material knowledge are merely external features of the illusory energy, and by culturing them one becomes no better than an ass. Here in Śrī Īśopaniṣad the same principle is repeated. Material advancement of knowledge means actually converting a human being to the status of an ass. Some materialistic politicians, under cover of spiritual garments, do decry the present system of civilization as satanic, but unfortunately they do not care for the culture of real knowledge which is described in the Bhagavad-gītā, and therefore they cannot change the satanic situation.

In the modern setup of things, even a boy thinks himself self-sufficient, and pays no respect to elderly men. Thus, due to the wrong type of education imparted by our universities, boys all

over the world have become the cause of headache to the elderly people. Therefore Śrī Īśopaniṣad warns very strongly that the culture of nescience is different from that of knowledge. The universities are, so to speak, centers of nescience only, and therefore the scientists are busy discovering lethal weapons to wipe out the existence of other countries. University students today are not given instructions on the regulative principles of brahmacārya, the spiritual process of life, nor do they have any faith in the respective scriptural injunctions. Religious principles are taught for the sake of name and fame only, and not for the matter of practical action.

Therefore there is animosity not only in the social and political fields, but in the field of religion as well. Nationalism in different parts of the world has also developed on account of this nescient education of the people. They have no information that this tiny earth is just a lump of matter floating in immeasurable material space along with many other lumps. In comparison to the vastness of space, these material lumps are like dust particles in the air. Because God has kindly made these lumps of matter complete in themselves, they are perfectly equipped with all necessary arrangements for floating on in space. Our sputnik drivers are very proud of their achievements, but they do not look to the Supreme Driver of these greater, more gigantic sputniks called planets.

There are innumerable suns occupying space, with innumerable arrangements of planetary systems. We small

creatures, as the infinitesimal parts and parcels of the Supreme Lord, are trying to dominate these unlimited planets by repeated birth and death, but are generally frustrated by old age and disease. This span of human life is scheduled for about 100 years, although it is gradually decreasing to the limit of 20 or 30 years of life. Thanks to the culture of nescient education, befooled men have created their own nationalisms within these planets in order to grasp at sense enjoyment for these few 20 or 30 years. Such foolish people are drawing up various plans to make some demarked portion of earth as perfect as possible, which is ultimately ridiculous.

And for this purpose each and every nation has become a source of anxiety for the others. More than 50% of their energy is spoiled in defense measures, with no caring for the real culture of knowledge, and they are falsely proud of becoming advanced in both material and spiritual knowledge. Śrī Īśopaniṣad warns of this faulty mode of education, and the Bhagavad-gītā gives instructions as to the development of real knowledge. In this mantra there is a hint that the instruction of vidyã, knowledge, must be gained from the dhīra. Dhīra means undisturbed, not disturbed by material illusion. No one can be undisturbed unless and until he has perfect spiritual realization. When one is perfectly spiritually realized he has no more hankering for anything acquired, nor does he lament for anything lost.

Such a dhīra has realized that the material body and mind which he has acquired by chance material association are foreign

elements, and therefore he simply makes the best use of a bad bargain. The material body and mind are bad bargains for the spiritual living entity. The living entity has different functions in the living world, but this material world is dead. As long as the living spiritual sparks manipulate the dead lumps of matter, the dead world appears to be a living world. But actually it is the living souls, the parts and parcels of the Supreme Living Being, which move the world. The dhīras are those who have come to know all these facts by hearing of them from superior authorities, and who have realized them by following the regulative principles.

To follow the regulative principles, one must go under the shelter of a bona fide spiritual master. The transcendental message comes down from the spiritual master to the disciple with the regulative principles, and not in the hazardous way of nescient education. One can become a dhīra only by such submissive hearing from the Personality of Godhead. The perfect disciple must be like Arjuna, and the spiritual master must be as good as the Lord Himself. These are the processes of learning vidyã, knowledge, from the dhīra, the undisturbed. Adhīra, one who has not undergone the training of a dhīra, cannot be an instructive leader. Modern politicians who pose themselves as dhīras are themselves adhīras. One cannot expect perfect knowledge from them. They are busy with their own remuneration in dollars and pounds. How can they lead the mass of people to the right path of self realization? One must hear

submissively from the dhīra in order to get actual education in life.

## 11

*vidyāṁ cāvidyāṁ ca yas*
*tad vedobhayaṁ saha*
*avidyayā mṛtyuṁ tīrtvā*
*vidyayāmṛtam aśnute*

### SYNONYMS

*vidyām*—knowledge in fact; *ca*—and; *avidyām*—nescience; *ca*—and; *yaḥ*—a person who; *tat*—that; *veda*—knows; *ubhayam*—both; *saha*—simultaneously; *avidyayā*—by culture of nescience; *mṛtyum*—repeated death; *tīrtvā*—transcending; *vidyayā*—by culture of knowledge; *amṛtam*—deathlessness; *aśnute*—enjoys.

### TRANSLATION

**Only one who can learn the process of nescience and that of transcendental knowledge side by side can transcend the influence of repeated birth and death, and enjoy the full blessings of immortality.**

### PURPORT

Since the start of the material world everyone is trying for a permanent life, but the law of Nature is so cruel that no one has avoided the hand of death. No one wants to die. That is a practical fact. Nor does anyone want to become old or diseased. But the law of Nature does not allow anyone immunity from

death, old age or disease. The advancement of material knowledge has not solved these problems of life. Material science can discover the nuclear bomb to accelerate the process of death, but it cannot discover anything which can protect man from the cruel hands of death, disease and old age. From the Purāṇas we learn of the activities of Hiraṇyakaśipu: This king was materially very much advanced, and by his material acquisitions, by the strength of his nescience, he wanted to conquer death.

He underwent a type of meditation so severe that all the planetary systems became disturbed by his mystic powers. He forced the creator of the universe, the demigod named Brahmã, to come down to him, and then he asked him for the benediction of becoming an amara, one who does not die. Brahmã refused to award this, however, because even he, the material creator, who has command over all the planets, is not himself an amara. He has a long duration of life, as is confirmed in the Bhagavad-gītā, but that does not mean that he doesn't have to die. Hiraṇya means gold, and kaśipu means soft bed. This gentleman was interested in these two things, money and women, and he wanted to enjoy this sort of life by becoming artificially immortal.

He asked Brahmã many things indirectly in hopes of fulfilling his desire to become an amara. He asked benediction that he might not be killed by any man, animal, god, or any living being within the categories of the 8,400,000 species. He also asked that he might not die on the land, in the air, in the water or by

any weapon whatsoever. So on and on, Hiraṇyakaśipu thought foolishly that this would guarantee him against death. But in the end, although Brahmã granted him all these benedictions, he was killed by the Personality of Godhead in the Form of a half-man, half-lion. And no weapon was used to kill him except the nails of the Lord. He was killed on the lap of the wonderful Living Being Who was beyond his conception.

The whole point here is that even Hiraṇyakaśipu, the most powerful of materialists, could not become deathless by his various plans. What, then, will be accomplished by the tiny Hiraṇyakaśipus of today, who make plans which are throttled from moment to moment? Śrī Īśopaniṣad instructs us not to make one-sided attempts to win the struggle for existence. Everyone is struggling hard for existence, but the law of material Nature is so hard and fast that it does not allow any to surpass it. In order to have permanent life one must be prepared to go back to Godhead. This process of going back to Godhead is a different branch of knowledge, and it has to be learnt from the revealed Vedic Scriptures, such as the Upaniṣads, Vedãnta, Bhagavad-gītā, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, etc.

Therefore, to become happy in this life and to get a permanent blissful life after leaving this material body, one must take to this sacred literature and obtain transcendental knowledge. The conditioned living being has forgotten his eternal relation with God, and he has mistakenly accepted the temporary place of birth as all-in-all. The Lord has kindly

delivered the abovementioned Scriptures in India and other Scriptures in other countries to remind the forgetful human being that his home is not here in this material world. The living being is a spiritual entity, and he can only be happy by returning to his spiritual home, with the Godhead. The Personality of Godhead, from His Kingdom, sends His bona fide servants to propagate this mission of going back to Godhead, and sometimes He comes Himself to do this work.

All living beings are His beloved sons, His parts and parcels, and therefore God is more sorry than we ourselves are for the sufferings which we are constantly undergoing in the material condition. The miseries of the material world are also indirect reminders of our incompatibility with dead matter, and intelligent living entities generally take note of these reminders, and side by side engage themselves in the culture of vidyã, or transcendental knowledge. Human life is the best opportunity for the culture of spiritual knowledge, and the human being who does not take advantage of this opportunity in human life is called a narãdhama, the lowest of human beings. The path of avidyã, or material advancement of knowledge for sense gratification, means repetition of death and repetition of birth also.

The living entity, as he is spiritually, has no birth or death. Birth and death are concerned with the outward covering of the spirit soul, the body. This is compared with the putting on and taking off of outward garments. Foolish human beings who are

grossly absorbed in the culture of avidyã, nescience, do not mind this cruel process, but, being enamored of the beauty of the illusory energy, they do the same things over repeatedly, without learning any lesson from the law of Nature. The culture of vidyã or transcendental knowledge is essential for the human being. Unrestricted sense enjoyment in the diseased, material condition of the senses must be restricted as far as possible. Unrestricted sense enjoyment in this bodily condition is the path of ignorance and death.

The living entities are not without spiritual senses. Every living being in his original spiritual form has all the senses which are now material, covered by the body and the mind. Activities of the material senses are perverted reflections of spiritual pastimes. The engagement of the spirit soul under the material covering is the diseased condition of the soul. And real sense enjoyment is possible when the disease is removed. In our pure spiritual form, freed from all material contamination, pure enjoyment of the senses is possible. The aim of human life should, therefore, not be perverted sense enjoyment, but should be to cure the material disease. Aggravating the material disease is no sign of knowledge. It is the sign of culturing avidyã, ignorance.

The degree of a fever must not be increased from 105 to 107 for good health. The degree is to be reduced to the normal state of 98.6. That should be the aim of human life. The modern trend of material civilization is to increase the degree of the feverish

material condition, which has therefore reached the point of 107 in the form of atomic energy, with the foolish politicians crying that at any moment the world may go to hell. That is the result of the advancement of material knowledge, and of the neglect of the most important part of life, the culture of spiritual knowledge. Here is a warning in Śrī Īśopaniṣad that we must not follow such a dangerous path leading to death.

On the contrary, we must side by side develop the culture of spiritual knowledge so that we may become completely free from the cruel hands of death. This does not mean that all civic activities for the maintenance of the body should be stopped. There is no question of stopping activities, as there is no question of wiping out one's temperature altogether when trying to recover from a disease. We have already tried to explain the matter by the expression "to make the best use of a bad bargain." The culture of spiritual knowledge has to be done with the help of this body and mind, and therefore maintenance of the body and mind is required if we are to reach our goal.

The normal temperature should be maintained at 98.6 degrees, but it should not be foolishly increased to the degree of 107. The great sages and saints of India wanted to maintain the normal temperature by a balanced program of material and spiritual knowledge. They never allowed the misuse of human intelligence for diseased sense gratification. Human activities diseased by a temperament of sense gratification have been regulated in the Vedas under the principles of Salvation. This

system is found in four divisions: religion, economic development, sense gratification and salvation. At the present moment the people have no interest either in religion or salvation. They have only one aim in life, sense gratification, and in order to fulfill this end they have different plans for economic development.

Misguided man thinks that religion should be maintained for its contribution to economic development, and that economic development is required for sense gratification. And in order to guarantee further sense gratification after death, in heaven, there is some system of religious observances. But this is not the purpose of the principles of salvation. The path of religion is actually for self realization. Economic development is required just to maintain the body in a sound, healthy condition. A man should live in a healthy condition of life with a sound mind just to realize vidyã, true knowledge, which is the aim of human life. This life is not meant for working like an ass or for the culture of avidyã or for sense gratification.

The path of vidyã is most perfectly presented in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. The Bhāgavatam directs a human being to utilize his life in the matter of enquiring about the Absolute Truth. The Absolute Truth is realized step by step as Brahman, Paramãtman, and, at last, Bhagavãn, the Personality of Godhead. This Absolute Truth is realized by the broadminded man who has attained knowledge and detachment, having followed the 18 principles of the Bhagavad-gītā described above. The central

point in these 18 principles is the attainment of transcendental devotional service to the Personality of Godhead. Therefore it is recommended for all classes of men to learn the art of devotional service to the Lord. Religiousness, economic development and sense gratification without the aim of attaining devotional service to the Lord are all different forms of nescience, as will be shown hereafter in Śrī Īśopaniṣad. Thus, to culture vidyã especially in this age, one must always hear and chant and worship with concentrated attention, targetted on the Personality of Godhead, Who is the Lord of the transcendentalists.

## 12

*andhaṁ tamaḥ praviśanti*
*ye 'sambhūtim upāsate*
*tato bhūya iva te tamo*
*ya u sambhūtyām ratāḥ*

### SYNONYMS

*andham*—ignorance; *tamaḥ*—darkness; *praviśanti*—enter into; *ye*—those who; *asambhūtim*—demigods; *upāsate*—worship; *tataḥ*—than that; *bhūyaḥ*—still more; *iva*—like that; *te*—those; *tamaḥ*—darkness; *ye*—who; *u*—also; *sambhūtyām*—in the Absolute; *ratāḥ*—engaged.

### TRANSLATION

**Those who are engaged in the worship of demigods enter into the darkest region of ignorance, and still more so do the worshipers of the Absolute.**

### PURPORT

The Sanskrit word asambhūti means those who have no independent existence. Sambhūti is the Absolute Personality of Godhead, Who is absolutely independent of everything. In the Bhagavad-gītā, the Absolute Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, positively describes Himself in the following words: "I am the Supreme Cause of the powers delegated to the demigods, the

great sages and the mystics. And because these are endowed with limited powers, it is very difficult for them to know how I appear Myself, by My own internal potency, in the form of a man." All philosophers and great ṛṣis, or mystics, try to distinguish the Absolute from the relative by their tiny brain power. However, this can only help them to reach the point of negating relativity, without realizing any positive trace of the Absolute.

Definition of the Absolute by negation is not a complete concept. Such negative definitions lead one to create a concept of his own, and one then imagines that the Absolute must be formless and without qualities. But these negations are simply the opposite numbers of the relative forms and qualities, and are themselves therefore relative. By such a concept of the Absolute one can at the utmost reach to the impersonal effulgence of God, known as Brahman; but one cannot make further progress to the stage of Bhagavãn, the Personality of Godhead. Such mental speculators do not know that Kṛṣṇa is the Absolute Personality of Godhead, and that the impersonal Brahman is the glaring effulgence of His transcendental body, while Paramãtman, the Supersoul, is His all-pervading representation.

They do not know that Kṛṣṇa has His eternal Form, with transcendental qualities of eternal bliss and knowledge. The dependent demigods and great sages imperfectly realize Him as one of the powerful demigods, but they consider that the Brahman effulgence is the ultimate Absolute Truth. Kṛṣṇa's devotees, however —who by dint of their unalloyed devotion

surrender unto Him—can know that He is the Absolute Person, and that everything emanates from Him only. Such devotees continuously render loving service unto Kṛṣṇa, the Fountainhead of everything. In the Bhagavad-gītā it is also said that only bewildered persons, driven by a strong desire for sense gratification, worship the demigods for the satisfaction of temporary problems. A temporary relief from a certain difficulty by the grace of some demigod is the demand of less intelligent persons.

The living being is in the material entanglement, and he has to be relieved from material bondage entirely to obtain permanent relief on the spiritual plane, where eternal bliss, life and knowledge exist. In the Bhagavad-gītā it is said that the worshipers of the demigods can go to the planets of the respective demigods. The Moon worshipers can go to the Moon, the Sun worshipers can go to the planet of the Sun, and so on. Modern scientists are now trying to go to the Moon with the help of rockets, which is not really a new attempt. The human being with his advanced consciousness is naturally inclined to travel in outer space and to reach other planets, either by sputniks, by mystic powers, or by worshiping the particular predominating deity on that planet.

In the Vedic scriptures it is said that one can reach other planets in any of the ways mentioned above, most generally by worshiping the demigod presiding over the particular planet. But these planets are temporary residential places; the only

permanent planets are the Vaikuṇṭha-lokas, found in the spiritual sky, where the Personality of Godhead predominates. The Bhagavad-gītā confirms this as follows: Even though one may rise to the highest planet, Brahmā-loka, one has to come back again. But if someone attains to Me (in the spiritual world), he doesn't have to take birth again. Śrī Īśopaniṣad suggests that one remains in the darkest region by hovering over the material planets, whatever his means may be. The whole universe is covered by the gigantic material elements, just like a coconut ball half-filled with water.

As it is airtight and fully covered, the darkness within is dense, and therefore planets like the Sun and the Moon are required to illuminate the inside of the universe. Outside the universe there is a vast expansion of unlimited Brahma-jyoti space, full of Vaikuṇṭhalokas. The biggest and the highest planet in the Brahma-jyoti is the Kṛṣṇa-loka, or Goloka Vṛndāvana, where the Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, resides. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa never quits this Kṛṣṇa-loka where He dwells with His eternal associates, and yet He is omnipresent throughout the complete material and spiritual cosmic situation. This fact has already been explained in Mantra Four of Śrī Īśopaniṣad. The Lord is present everywhere, as the Sun is. A man can move through space with the highest possible speed, and still he will find that the Sun is there, although the Sun is situated in its own undeviating orbit.

The problem of life cannot be solved by going to the Moon. There are many pseudo- worshipers who become religionists for the sake of name and fame only. Such pseudo- religionists do not wish to get out of this universe and reach the spiritual sky. They want only to maintain the status quo in the material world, under the garb of worshiping the Lord. And the atheists and the impersonalists lead such foolish pseudo-religionists into the darkest regions by preaching the cult of atheism. The atheist directly denies the existence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and the impersonalist supports the atheist by preaching the impersonal existence of the Supreme Lord. As far as we have gone through Śrī Īśopaniṣad, we have not come across any mantra where the Personality of Godhead is denied.

It is said that He can run faster than anyone. Those who are running after the planets are certainly persons, and if the Lord can run faster than all of them, why should He be considered impersonal? The impersonal conception of the Supreme Lord is another face of ignorance, due to an imperfect vision of the Absolute Truth. And so the ignorant pseudo-religionists, the manufacturers of so-called incarnations— directly violating the Vedic injunctions—are liable to enter into the darkest region of the universe, on account of their business of misleading those who follow them. These impersonalists generally pose themselves as incarnations of God to the foolish, who have no knowledge of the Vedic wisdom. And if such foolish men have any knowledge at all, it is more dangerous in their hands than ignorance itself.

Such impersonalists do not even worship the demigods as is recommended in the scriptures. In the scriptures there is a recommendation for worshiping the demigods under different circumstances, but at the same time it is said that there is no real need for this. In the Bhagavad-gītā it is clearly stated that the results of worshiping the demigods are not permanent. The whole material world is not permanent, and therefore anything achieved here within the darkness of material existence is also impermanent. The problem, then, is how to obtain real and permanent life. The Lord states that as soon as one reaches Him by devotional service—which is the one and only way to approach the Personality of Godhead—there is complete freedom from the bondage of birth and death.

In other words, the path of salvation, or getting out of the material clutches, fully depends on the principles of knowledge and detachment. And the pseudo-religionists have neither knowledge nor detachment from material affairs. Most of them want to continue in the golden shackles of material bondage, under the shadow of altruistic and philanthropic activities, and in the name of religious principles. By false religious sentiments they present a make-show of devotional service, indulging in all sorts of immoral principles, and still pass as spiritual masters and devotees of God. Such violators of religious principles have no respect for the authoritative ãcãryas, the holy teachers in the strict disciplic succession; and to mislead the people in general they themselves become so- called ãcãryas, without even following the principles of the ãcãryas.

These rogues in human society are the most dangerous elements and, for want of religious government, they pass on without being punished by the law of the state. They cannot, however, avoid the law of the Supreme, Who has clearly declared in the Bhagavad- gītā that these envious demons, in the garb of religious propagandists, shall be thrown down into the darkest region of hell. It is confirmed in Śrī Īśopaniṣad that the pseudo-religionists are heading toward the most obnoxious place in the universe after finishing with the spiritual mastership business, which is simply for the matter of sense gratification.

## 13

*anyad evāhuḥ sambhavād*
*anyad āhur asambhavāt*
*iti śuśruma dhīrāṇāṁ*
*ye nas tad vicacakṣire*

### SYNONYMS

*anyat*—different; *eva*—certainly; *āhuḥ*—it is said; *sambhavāt*—by worshiping the Supreme Lord, the cause of all causes; *anyat*—different; *āhuḥ*—it is said; *asambhavāt*—by worshiping what is not the Supreme; *iti*—thus; *śuśruma*—I heard it; *dhīrāṇām*—from the undisturbed authorities; *ye*—who; *naḥ*—unto us; *tat*—about that subject matter; *vicacakṣire*—perfectly explained.

### TRANSLATION

**It is said that one result is obtained by worshiping the Supreme Cause of all causes, and that another is obtained by worshiping what is not supreme. All this was heard from the undisturbed authorities who clearly explained it.**

### PURPORT

In this mantra of Śrī Īśopaniṣad the system of hearing from the undisturbed authorities is confirmed. Unless one hears from the bona fide ãcãrya, who is never disturbed by the changes of the

material world, one cannot have the real key to transcendental knowledge. The bona fide spiritual master, who has also heard the Śruti mantras, or Vedic knowledge, from his undisturbed ãcãrya, never manufactures or presents anything which is not mentioned in the Vedic literature. In the Bhagavad-gītā it is clearly said that the worshipers of the Pitṛs, or forefathers, reach the forefathers, the gross materialists who make plans to remain here in this world remain here, and the devotees of the Lord, who worship none but Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Cause of all causes, reach Him in His Abode in the spiritual sky.

Here also in Śrī Īśopaniṣad, it is said that different results are achieved by different modes of worship. If we worship the Supreme Lord, certainly we will reach the Supreme Lord in His eternal Abode, and if we worship demigods like the Sun and Moon, we can reach these respective planets without any doubt. And if we want to remain here on this wretched planet with our planning commissions and our stop-gap political adjustments, we can certainly do that also. Nowhere in authentic scriptures is it said that whatever you do and whatever you worship you will ultimately reach the same goal. Such foolish theories are offered by self-made masters who have no connection with the paramparã, the bona fide system of disciplic succession.

The bona fide spiritual master cannot say that for everyone who has his own mode of worship—be it worship of the demigods or of the Supreme —it leads to the same goal. For a common man it is very easy to understand that a person starting by train from

Bombay can reach the destination for which he has purchased his ticket, and nowhere else. A person who has purchased a ticket for Calcutta can reach Calcutta. But contemporary so- called masters preach that, whatever spiritual ticket you may purchase, it will take you to the Supreme Goal. Such mundane and compromising offers attract many foolish creatures to become puffed up with their manufactured methods of spiritual realization, but the Vedic instruction doesn't uphold them.

Unless one has received knowledge from the bona fide spiritual master—one who is in the recognized line of disciplic succession—one cannot have the real thing as it is. The Bhagavad-gītā says: Thus, O chastiser of the foe, the yoga principles [of the Gītā] were known to the great kings. But, the paramparã system being broken, these principles appear now to be lost. When Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa was present in this world, the bhakti-yoga principles defined in the Bhagavad-gītā had become distorted, and so the Lord had to re-establish the disciplic system, beginning with Arjuna, who was the most confidential friend and devotee of the Lord. The Lord clearly said to Arjuna that it was because he was His devotee and friend that the principles of the Gītā were understandable to him.

In other words, no one can understand the Gītā who is not a devotee and friend of the Lord. This means that only one who follows the path of Arjuna can understand the Gītā. At the present moment there are many interpreters of this sublime dialogue who have nothing to do with Arjuna or Lord Krsna.

They interpret the verses of the Bhagavadgītā in their own ways, and postulate all sorts of rubbish in the name of the Gītā. Such interpreters believe neither in Śrī Kṛṣṇa nor in His eternal Abode. So, then, what can they explain about the Bhagavad-gītā? The Gītā clearly says that only those who have lost their senses worship the demigods. Kṛṣṇa ultimately advises that one should give up all other ways and modes of worship, and fully surrender unto Him only.

Those persons who are cleansed of all sinful reactions can have such unflinching faith in the Supreme Lord. Others will continue hovering over the material sphere with their paltry ways of worship, and thus will be misled from the real path, under the false impression that all paths lead to the same goal. In this mantra the Sanskrit word sambhavãt, worship of the Supreme Cause, is very significant. Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Original Personality of Godhead, and everything that exists has emanated from Him. In the Gītā the Lord explains Himself. He says there that He is the Creator of everyone, including Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. And because these three principal deities of the material world are created by the Lord, He is the Creator of all that exists in the material and spiritual worlds.

In the Atharva Veda it is similarly said that One Who existed before the creation of Brahmã and One Who enlightened Brahmã with Vedic knowledge, is Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. "The Supreme Person desired to create the living entities, and thus Nārāyaṇa created all the beings. From Nārāyaṇa, Brahmã was born. Nārāyaṇa

created all the Prajãpatis. Nārāyaṇa created Indra. Nārāyaṇa created the eight Vasus. Nārāyaṇa created the eleven Rudras. Nārāyaṇa created the twelve Ādityas." This Nārāyaṇa being the plenary manifestation of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Nārāyaṇa and Kṛṣṇa are one and the same. There are later readings also which say that the same Supreme Lord is the Son of Devakī. His childhood with Devakī and Vasudeva and His identity with Nārāyaṇa have also been confirmed by Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya, even though Śaṅkarā does not belong to the Vaiṣṇava, or personalist, cult.

There are still other readings, also in the Atharva Veda, such as this: "Only Nãrãyana existed in the beginning, and there was no existence of Brahmã or Śiva, nor of Agni, the fire, nor of water. There were no stars, there was no Sun, no Moon. He does not remain alone. He creates as He desires." In the Mokṣa-dharma it is said: "I created the Prajãpatis and the Rudras. They have not complete knowledge of Me because they are also covered by My illusory energy. In the Varāha Purāṇa it is said: "Nārāyaṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and from Him the four-headed Brahmã became manifested, as also did Rudra, who later became omniscient." Thus all Vedic literature will confirm this view that Nārāyaṇa or Kṛṣṇa is the Cause of all causes.

In the Brahma-saṁhitā also it is said that the Supreme Lord is Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He is "Govinda," the Delighter of every living being, and He is the Primeval Cause of all causes. The really learned person will know all this by the evidence of great sages and the

Vedas, and will thus decide to worship Lord Krsna as all-in-all. Persons are called buddha, or really learned, who fasten themselves only to the worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This conviction can be established when one hears the transcendental message from the undisturbed ãcãrya, with faith and love. One who has no faith in, or love for, Lord Kṛṣṇa cannot be convinced of this simple truth. Such faithless persons are described in the Bhagavad-gītā as mūdhas, foolish as the ass.

It is said that the mūdhas deride the Personality of Godhead because they don't have complete knowledge from the undisturbed ãcãrya. One who is disturbed by the whirlpool movements of the material energy is not qualified to become an ãcãrya. Before hearing the Gītā, Arjuna was disturbed by this whirlpool--the reaction of family, society and community affection—and thus he wanted to become a philanthropist and a nonviolent man of the world. But when he became buddha, by hearing the Vedic knowledge of the Bhagavad-gītā from the Supreme Person, he changed his decision and became a worshiper of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who had Himself designed the Battle of Kurukṣetra. Arjuna worshiped the Lord by fighting with his socalled relatives, and thus became a pure devotee of the Lord.

Such achievements are possible only by worshiping the real Kṛṣṇa and not by worshiping some fabricated "Kṛṣṇa" inaugurated by foolish men who are without knowledge of the intricacies of the science of Kṛṣṇa described in the Gītā and in the

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. According to the Vedãnta-sūtra, the Sambhūta is the source of birth and sustenance, and the reservoir after annihilation. The Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the natural commentary upon the Vedãnta-sūtras by the same author, comments that the source of all emanations is not a dead stone, but is abhijñah, or fully conscious. Therefore, the Primeval Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in the Gītā that He is fully conscious of the past, the present and the future: and no one, including demigods such as Śiva and Brahmã, knows Him fully.

Those who are disturbed by the tides of material existence cannot know Him fully. Such half-educated spiritual masters try to make some compromise, and make the mass of human beings the object of worship. They do not know that such worship of the masses is not possible, nor are the masses perfect. This is something like pouring water on the leaves of the tree, instead of watering the root. The natural process of worship is to pour water on the root of the tree from which the leaves grow. But today's disturbed leaders become more attracted by the leaves than the root, and therefore, in spite of perpetually watering the leaves, all is drying up for want of nourishment. Śrī Īśopaniṣad advises us to pour water on the root, the Source of all germination.

Worshiping the mass population by rendering bodily service which can never be perfect is less important than service to the soul. The soul is the root generating different types of bodies in terms of the law of karma, or material reaction. To serve only the

human being by medical aids, social amenities and educational facilities, while cutting the throats of poor animals in slaughterhouses, does not add up to any valid service to the living beings. The living being is perpetually suffering from the material disease of birth, death, old age and disease, in different types of body. The human form of life is a chance to get out of this entanglement of material existence. This can be done simply by reestablishing the lost relationship of the living entity with the Supreme Lord.

And the Lord comes personally to teach us this philosophy of surrender unto the Supreme, the Sambhūtam. Real service to humankind is to teach surrender unto the Supreme Lord, and to worship Him only, with full love and energy. That is the instruction of Śrī Īśopaniṣad in this mantra. The simple way to worship the Supreme Lord in this age of disturbance is to hear and chant about His great activities. The mental speculators, however, think of the activities of the Lord as imaginary, and therefore they refrain from any such hearing process, and invent some jugglery of words, without any substance, to divert the attention of the poor innocent mass of people. Instead of hearing the activities of Lord Kṛṣṇa, they prefer to advertise themselves by inducing their followers to sing about the pseudo-spiritual master.

In modern times, the number of such pretenders has increased in considerable numbers, and it has become a problem for the pure devotees of the Lord to save the mass of people from

the unholy propaganda of these pretenders and imitation incarnations of God. The Upaniṣads indirectly draw our attention to the Primeval Lord Sri Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and the Bhagavad-gītā, which is the summary of all Upaniṣads, directly points out Śrī Kṛṣṇa. One should, therefore, hear about Kṛṣṇa as He is in the Gītā or in the Śrīmad- Bhāgavatam, and that will gradually help him in cleansing his mind of all contaminated things. The Bhāgavatam says: "By hearing the activities of the Lord, one draws the attention of the Lord towards the devotee.

And the Lord, being situated in the heart of every living being, helps the devotee by giving him proper direction." The Bhagavad-gītā also confirms this. This inner direction by the Lord cleanses the heart of the devotee of all dirty things which are produced by the material modes of passion and ignorance. The nondevotees are under the direction of passion and ignorance. By passion one cannot become detached from material affinity, and by ignorance one cannot know what he actually is, and what the Lord is. Thus, in the state of passion, there is no chance for self realization however much one may play the false part of a religionist. For a devotee, by the grace of the Lord, the modes of passion and ignorance are removed, and he at once becomes situated in the quality of goodness, the sign of a perfect Brãhmana.

This stage of brãhminical qualification can be earned by anyone and everyone, provided he follows the path of devotional service under the guidance of a bona fide spiritual master. The

Bhāgavatam says that any lowborn living entity can be made purified under the guidance of a pure devotee of the Lord, because the Lord is so extraordinarily powerful. The first sign of brãhminical qualification is that the candidate becomes happy, and becomes enthusiastic in the matter of devotional service to the Lord. This unveils before him, automatically, all about the science of God. And, thus knowing the science of God, he gradually becomes loosened from his material attachments, and his doubtful mind becomes crystal clear, by the grace of the Lord. In this stage only can one become a liberated soul and see the Lord in every step of life. That is the perfection of sambhavãt as described in this mantra of Śrī Īśopaniṣad.

## 14

*sambhūtiṁ ca vināśaṁ ca*
*yas tad vedobhayaṁ saha*
*vināśena mṛtyuṁ tīrtvā*
*sambhūtyāmṛtam aśnute*

### SYNONYMS

*sambhūtim*—the eternal Personality of Godhead, His transcendental name, form, pastimes, qualities and paraphernalia, the variegatedness of His abode, etc.; *ca*—and; *vināśam*—the temporary material manifestation of demigods, men, animals, etc., with their false names, fame, etc.; *ca*—also; *yaḥ*—one who; *tat*—that; *veda*—knows; *ubhayam*—both; *saha*—along with; *vināśena*—with everything liable to be vanquished; *mṛtyum*—death; *tīrtvā*—surpassing; *sam-bhūtyā*—in the eternal kingdom of God; *amṛtam*—deathlessness; *aśnute*—enjoys.

### TRANSLATION

**One should know perfectly well about the Personality of Godhead and His transcendental Name, as well as the temporary material creation with its temporary demigods, men and animals. When one knows these, he surpasses death, and the ephemeral cosmic manifestation with it, and in the eternal Kingdom of God he enjoys his eternal life of bliss and knowledge.**

## PURPORT

Human civilization, by its so-called advancement of knowledge, has created many material things, including space capsules and atomic energy. But it has failed to create a situation in which man need not die, take his birth again, become old, or suffer from diseases. Whenever these questions are raised by an intelligent man before a so-called scientist, the scientist very cleverly replies that material science is progressing, and that it will ultimately be possible to render man deathless and ageless. Such answers by material scientists prove their gross ignorance of material Nature. In material Nature everything is under the stringent laws of matter, and must pass through six stages of existence: birth, growth, duration of life, transformation, deterioration, and death at last.

Nothing that is in contact with material Nature can be beyond the abovementioned six laws of existence, and therefore no one, whether demigod, man, animal, or tree, can survive forever here in the material world. The duration of life may vary in different species. Lord Brahmã, the chief living being within this material world, may continue his life for millions and millions of years, while the minute germs may live just for some hours; that does not matter. No one in this material world can survive eternally. Things here are born or created under certain conditions, they stay for some time, and, if they have life then they grow, create generations, then dwindle gradually, and at last are annihilated. By that law even the Brahmãs (there are millions of Brahmãs in

different universes—each one bigger than the last) are all liable to death, either today or tomorrow.

Therefore, the whole material world is called Martya-loka, the place of death. The material scientists and politicians are trying to make this place deathless because they have no information of the deathless spiritual nature, due to their ignorance of the Vedic literature. The Vedic literature is full of knowledge matured by experience. But modern man is averse to receive knowledge from the Vedas, Purāṇas, and other scriptures. In the Viṣṇu Purāṇa we have information that Lord Viṣṇu, the Personality of Godhead, possesses different energies, known as parã, superior, and aparã, or avidyã—inferior. The material energy in which we are at present involved is called the avidyã, inferior, energy; and the material creation is made possible by such energy. But there is another, superior energy called the parã-śakti, where everything is different from this material inferior Nature.

That nature is the eternal or deathless creation of the Lord. All the material planets—upper, lower and intermediate, including the Sun, Moon and Venus—are scattered over the universe. These planets exist only during the lifetime of Brahmã. Some lower planets, however, are vanquished after the end of one day of Brahmã, and they are again recreated during the next daytime of Brahmã. Time calculation on the upper planets is different from that of ours. One of our years is equal to twenty-four hours, or one day and night, on many of the upper planets. The four ages of Earth (Satya, Tretã, Dvãpara, Kali) make a

duration of twenty-two thousand years and five months in terms of the time of these upper planets.

Such a length of time multiplied by one thousand is one day of Brahma, and one night of Brahmã is the same. With such days and nights accumulating into months and years, Brahmã's life is estimated at one hundred years. And at the end of his life, the complete universal manifestation becomes vanquished. The living beings residing in the Sun and Moon, as well as those in the Martya-loka system—which includes this Earth and many planets below the Earth—are all merged into devastating water during the nighttime of Brahmã. During this time no living beings or species of life remain manifested, although spiritually they continue to exist. This non- manifested stage is called avyakta. And again, when the entire universe is vanquished at the end of Brahmã's lifetime, there is an avyakta state.

But beyond these two non-manifested states there is another, spiritual atmosphere or nature, where there is a great number of spiritual planets, existing eternally even when all the planets within this material universe are vanquished. The cosmic manifestation within the jurisdiction of the various Brahmãs is a display of one-fourth the energy of the Lord, and this energy is called inferior. The spiritual nature beyond the jurisdiction of Brahmã is called tri-pãda-vibhūti, three-fourths the energy of the Lord, and is the superior energy, or parã-prakṛti. The predominating Supreme Person in the spiritual nature is Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa. He can be approached only by unqualified devotional

service, and not by anything else, such as the processes of jñāna (philosophy) and yoga (mysticism), much less that of karma (fruitive work).

The karmīs, or fruitive workers, can elevate themselves to the Svargaloka planets, including the Sun and the Moon. Jñānīns and yogīs can reach still higher planets, such as the Brahmã-loka; and, becoming still more qualified by devotional service, they are allowed to enter into the spiritual nature, either in the illuminating cosmic atmosphere of the spiritual sky (the Brahman), or on the planets, according to qualification. It is certain, however, that no one can enter into the spiritual planets called Vaikuṇṭhas without being trained in devotional service. On the material planets, everyone from Brahmã down to the ant is trying to lord it over material Nature, and this is called the material disease. As long as this material disease continues, the living entity has to undergo the process of changing bodies, whether in the form of a demigod, a man, or an animal; and ultimately he has to endure the unmanifested condition during the two kinds of devastations: the night of Brahmã, and at the end of Brahma's life.

If we want to cease the process of repeated birth and death, and the concomitant factors of old age and disease, then we must try to enter into the spiritual planets, and Lord Kṛṣṇa by His plenary expansions is the dominating Figure on each and every one of them. No one can predominate over Kṛṣṇa. And anyone trying to predominate over material Nature is called a

conditioned soul, being subject to the laws of material Nature, suffering the pangs of repeated birth and death. The Lord comes here to re-establish the principles of religion, and the basic principle is to develop the attitude of surrender toward Him. The Lord teaches this in the last portion of the Bhagavad-gītā, but foolish men have tactfully misinterpreted this prime teaching, and have misled the people in diverse ways.

They have been urged to open hospitals, but are not interested in educating themselves to enter into the spiritual kingdom by devotional service. They have been taught to take interest only in temporary relief work, which can never bring about real happiness for the living entity. They start varieties of public and semigovernmental institutions for tackling the devastating power of Nature. But they don't know how to pacify insurmountable Nature. Many men are advertised as great scholars of the Bhagavad-gītā, but they overlook the factual method presented there to pacify material Nature. Powerful Nature can only be pacified by the awakening of God consciousness, as is clearly mentioned in the Gītā. Śrī Īśopaniṣad, however, teaches in this mantra that one must know both the sambhūti and the vināśa perfectly, side by side.

By knowing the vināśa alone—the temporary material manifestation—you cannot save anything: In the course of Nature, there is devastation at every moment. No one can be saved from these devastations by any efforts of hospital-opening. They can be saved only by complete knowledge of the

eternal life of bliss and awareness. The whole Vedic scheme is meant to educate men in this art of achieving eternal life. People are often misguided by other, temporarily attractive things based on sense gratification, but that sort of service which thus misleads them is most degraded. You must save your fellow man in the right sense. There is no question of liking or disliking the truth. It is there. If you want to be saved from repeated birth and death you must take to the devotional service of the Lord. There can be no compromise in the matter of necessity.

## 15

*hiraṇmayena pātreṇa*
*satyasyāpihitaṁ mukham*
*tat tvaṁ pūṣann apāvṛṇu*
*satya-dharmāya dṛṣṭaye*

### SYNONYMS

*hiraṇmayena*—by a golden effulgence; *pātreṇa*—by a dazzling covering; *satyasya*—of the Supreme Truth; *apihitam*—covered; *mukham*—the face; *tat*—that covering; *tvam*—Yourself; *pūṣan*—O sustainer; *apāvṛṇu*—kindly remove; *satya*—pure; *dharmāya*—unto the devotee; *dṛṣṭaye*—for exhibiting.

### TRANSLATION

**O my Lord, Sustainer of all that lives, Your real face is covered by Your dazzling effulgence. Kindly remove that covering and exhibit Yourself to Your pure devotee.**

### PURPORT

In the Bhagavad-gītā, the Lord explains about His Personal rays, called Brahma-jyoti— the dazzling effulgence of His Personal Form—as follows: I am the basis of the impersonal Brahman, which is immortal and imperishable, eternal, the constitutional position of ultimate happiness. (Gītā, 14/27) Brahman, Paramãtman and Bhagavãn are three angles of vision of the same

Absolute Truth. Brahman is the phase of the Absolute Truth most perceptible to the beginner. Paramãtman is the phase of the Absolute Truth for those who have progressed. And Bhagavãn is the ultimate realization of the Absolute Truth. This is confirmed in the Gītā, where the Lord says that He is the ultimate concept of the Absolute Truth. He is the source of Brahma- jyoti, as well as of the all-pervading Paramãtman feature.

As He says that He is the ultimate reservoir of the Brahma-jyoti, or impersonal conception of the Absolute Truth, so also He says in the Gītā that there is no need of explaining His unlimited potency: it can be summarized in short that, by His one plenary portion—the all-pervading Paramãtman—He maintains the complete material cosmic creation. And in the Spiritual World also He maintains all manifestations. Therefore, in the Śruti mantra of Śrī Īśopaniṣad, He is addressed as Pūṣan, the ultimate Maintainer. The Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is always full with transcendental bliss. When He was present at Vṛndāvana in India 5,000 years ago, He always remained in transcendental bliss, even from the beginning of His childhood pastimes. The killing of varieties of demons, such as Agha, Baka, Pūtanã and Pralamba were also pleasure excursions for Him.

When He was within His village He was enjoying with His mother, sisters and friends as the naughty Butter Thief, and everyone of His associates was enjoying celestial bliss by His stealing. The Lord is known as the Butter Thief, but the term is never used in a derogatory sense. The term Butter Thief, in the

case of the Lord, is used with the understanding of the pleasure of His pure devotees. Everything that was done by the Lord at Vṛndāvana was for the pleasure of His associates there. Such manifestations were created by Him to attract the dry speculators in the transcendental line, as well as the acrobats of the so-called hatha-yoga system, trying to find the Absolute Truth.

Of the childhood play of the Lord with His playmates, the cowherd boys, Śukadeva Gosvāmī in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam said: The Personality of Godhead, Who is perceived as the impersonal Brahman of bliss, Who is worshiped as the Supreme Lord by the devotees, and Who is considered an ordinary human being by the mundane, played with the cowherd boys who had achieved that position after a huge accumulation of pious deeds. Thus the Lord is ever engaged in transcendental loving activities along with His spiritual associates in the various relationships of śãnta, calmness, dãsya, servitorship, sãkhya, friendship, vãtsãlya, paternal affection, and mãdhurya, conjugal love. It is said that the Lord never goes out of the Vṛndāvana dhãma, and so it may be asked how He manages the affairs of His different creations.

This is answered in the Gītā: He pervades all the material creation by His plenary part, known as the Puruṣa incarnation. The Lord has nothing to do with material creation, maintenance and destruction, but He causes it to be done by His plenary expansion, this Paramãtman or Supersoul feature. Every living entity is known as ãtman, soul. The principal Ātman, Who

controls them all, is Paramãtman Supersoul. The whole system of God realization is a great science. The materialists can only analyze and meditate on the twenty-four factors of the material creation. They have very little information of the Puruṣa, the Lord. The impersonal transcendentalists are simply bewildered by the glaring effulgence of the Brahma-jyoti. If one wants to see the Absolute Truth in full, one has to penetrate beyond the twenty-four material elements and the glaring effulgence as well.

Śrī Īśopaniṣad hints at this direction, praying for removal of the hiraṇmaya pãtra, the dazzling covering. Unless this covering is removed, and unless one can perceive the Supreme Personality of Godhead as He is, factual realization of the Absolute Truth can never be achieved. The Paramãtman feature of the Personality of Godhead is one of three plenary expansions, collectively called Viṣṇu-tattva. The Viṣṇu-tattva within the universe (one of the three principal deities—Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva) is known as the Kṣīrodaka-śāyī Viṣṇu. He is the all-pervading Paramãtman in each and every individual living entity. And the Garbhodaka-śāyī Viṣṇu is the collective Supersoul of all living entities. Beyond these two there is the Kāraṇodaka-śāyī Viṣṇu lying in the Causal Ocean. He is the Creator of all the universes.

The yoga system teaches the serious student to meet such Viṣṇutattvas after overcoming the twenty-four material elements of cosmic creation. The culture of empiric philosophy helps one to realize the impersonal Brahma-jyoti, which is the glaring effulgence of the transcendental body of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This is

confirmed in the Bhagavad-gītā as well as in the Brahma-saṁhitā (5/40): In the millions and millions of universes, there are innumerable planets, each and every one of them different from the others by cosmic constitution, and all of them situated in a corner of the Brahma-jyoti. This Brahma-jyoti is the Personal ray of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Whom I do worship. This mantra of the Brahma-saṁhitā is the position of factual realization of the Absolute Truth, and the Śruti mantra of Śrī Īśopaniṣad under discussion is a confirmation of this mantra as a process of realization.

It is a simple prayer to the Lord to remove the Brahma-jyoti, so that one can see the real face of God. Perfect knowledge means to know the root of Brahman. The root of Brahman is Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and in scriptures such as the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam the science of Kṛṣṇa is perfectly elaborated. In the Bhāgavatam, the author, Śrīla Vyāsadeva, has established by realization that the Supreme Truth is described either as Brahman, Paramãtman or Bhagavãn. But he has never said that the Supreme Truth is anywhere described as jīva, the ordinary living entity. Therefore the living entity is not the all-powerful Supreme Truth. Otherwise, there would be no need of prayer by the entity for the Lord to remove the dazzling cover in order to see His real face.

The conclusion is, therefore, that in the absence of potent manifestations of the Supreme Truth, the impersonal Brahman is realized. Similarly, when there is realization of the material potencies of the Lord, with little or no information of the

spiritual potency, it is called Paramãtman realization. Therefore, both Brahman and Paramãtman realization of the Absolute Truth are partial realizations. But when one realizes the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in full potency after the removal of the hiraṇmaya-pãtra, as is prayed for in this mantra, then he realizes that Vãsudevaḥ sarvam iti: Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, known as Vãsudeva, is everything—Brahman, Paramãtman and Bhagavãn. He is Bhagavãn, the root, and Brahman and Paramãtman are His branches. In the Bhagavad-gītā there is a comparative analysis of the three grades of transcendentalists, known as jñānīns, the worshipers of the impersonal Brahman, the yogīs, or worshipers of the Paramãtman feature, and bhaktas, or devotees of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

It is stated in the Gītā that amongst all types of transcendentalists, one who is a jñānī, who has cultured the Vedic knowledge, is supreme. Yet the yogīs are still more than the jñānīns. The yogīs are far superior to fruitive workers as well. And amongst all kinds of yogīs, "the one who constantly serves the Lord with all his energy is topmost." The summary is that a philosopher is better than a laboring man, and a mystic is far superior to a philosopher. And of all the mystic yogis, one who is following bhakti yoga, who is constantly engaged in the service of the Lord, is the highest. Śrī Īśopaniṣad directs us toward this perfection of life.

## 16

*pūṣann ekarṣe yama sūrya prājāpatya*
*vyūha raśmīn samūha*
*tejo yat te rūpaṁ kalyāṇa-tamaṁ*
*tat te paśyāmi yo 'sāv asau puruṣaḥ so 'ham asmi*

### SYNONYMS

*pūṣan*—O maintainer; *eka-ṛṣe*—the primeval philosopher; *yama*—the regulating principle; *sūrya*—the destination of the sūris (great devotees); *prājāpatya*—the well-wisher of the prajāpatis (progenitors of mankind); *vyūha*—kindly remove; *raśmīn*—the rays; *samūha*—kindly withdraw; *tejaḥ*—effulgence; *yat*—so that; *te*—Your; *rūpam*—form; *kalyāṇa-tamam*—most auspicious; *tat*—that; *te*—Your; *paśyāmi*—I may see; *yaḥ*—one who is; *asau*—like the sun; *asau*—that; *puruṣaḥ*—Personality of Godhead; *saḥ*—myself; *aham*—I; *asmi*—am.

### TRANSLATION

**O my Lord, O primeval Philosopher, Maintainer of the universe, O regulating Principle, Destination of the pure devotees, Well-wisher of the progenitors of mankind, please remove the effulgence of Your transcendental rays, so that I can see Your Form of Bliss. You are the eternal Supreme Personality of Godhead, like unto the Sun, as I am.**

## PURPORT

The Sun and the Sun's rays are one and the same qualitatively. Similarly, the Lord and the living entities are one and the same in quality. The Sun is one, but the molecules of the Sun's rays are innumerable. The Sun's rays constitute part of the Sun; the Sun and the rays conjointly are the complete Sun. Within the Sun planet there is the Sun god, and similarly within the supreme spiritual planet, Goloka Vṛndāvana, from which the effulgent Brahma- jyoti is emanating, there is the eternal Lord, as is stated in the Brahma-saṁhitā: The transcendental Abode of Lord Krsna is the land of touchstones, of which the houses are built, shaded by desire trees. The Lord is engaged there in herding the surabhi cows, and is always served and surrounded by thousands of Goddesses of Fortune, who wait upon Him with all respect.

The description of this transcendental Abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa is in the Brahma-saṁhitā, and the Brahma-jyoti is described there as the supreme rays from that planet, just as the Sun's rays come from the Sun globe. Unless one surpasses the Brahma-jyoti glare, one cannot have any information of the land of the Lord. The impersonalist philosopher, being blinded by the dazzling Brahma-jyoti, cannot realize the factual Abode of the Lord, nor His transcendental form. Affected by such a poor fund of knowledge, the thinkers cannot understand the all- blissful transcendental form of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Īśopaniṣad, therefore, offers this prayer to the Lord to remove the effulgent rays of the Brahma-jyoti, so that the pure devotee can see His all-blissful transcendental form.

By realization of the impersonal Brahma-jyoti, one experiences the auspicious aspect of the Supreme; by experience of the Paramãtman, or all-pervading feature of the Supreme, one experiences a still more auspicious enlightenment, and by meeting the Personality of Godhead face to face, the devotee experiences the most auspicious feature of the Supreme. Being addressed as the Philosopher, the Maintainer, the Wellwisher, and so forth, the Supreme Truth cannot be considered impersonal. That is the indication of Śrī Īśopaniṣad. The word Maintainer is especially significant: The Lord maintains His devotees specifically, although He is the Maintainer of one and all beings. By surpassing the impersonal Brahma- jyoti, when the devotee sees the personal aspect of the Lord and His most auspicious eternal form, then the devotee realizes the Absolute Truth in full.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī says in his Bhagavat-sandarbha as follows: The complete conception of the Absolute Truth is realized in the Personality of Godhead, because He is Almighty, with full potency in transcendence. In the Brahma-jyoti the full potency of the Absolute Truth is not realized, and therefore Brahman realization is only partial realization of the Personality of Godhead. O learned sages, the first letter of the word Bhagavãn is twice significant: first in the sense of "one who fully maintains," and second in the sense of "guardian." The second letter ga— means guide, leader or creator. The letter va (or ba) means that every being lives in Him, and He also lives in every being. In other words, the transcendental sound Bhagavãn represents the

infinite knowledge, potency, energy, opulence, strength and influence, all without any tinge of material inebrieties.

The Lord fully maintains His unalloyed devotees, and He guides such devotees progressively on the path of devotional perfection. As Leader of His devotees, He ultimately awards the desired result of devotional service by giving Himself to His devotees. The devotees of the Lord see the Lord eye to eye by the causeless mercy of the Lord, and thus the Lord helps His devotees to reach the supermost spiritual planet, Goloka Vṛndāvan. As Creator, He can create all the necessary qualifications in His devotee so that the devotee can ultimately reach Him. The Lord is the Cause of all causes, and there is no cause of Him, for He is the Original Cause. As such He enjoys His own Self by manifesting His own internal potency.

The external potency is manifested not exactly by Himself, for He expands Himself as the Puruṣas, and it is in these forms that He maintains the features of the material manifestation. By such expansions does He create, maintain and annihilate the cosmic manifestation. The living entities are also differentiated expansions of His Self, and because some of the living entities desire to be lord, imitating the Supreme Lord, He allows them to enter into the cosmic creation, with the option of fully utilizing their propensity for lording it over. On account of the presence of His parts and parcels, the living entities, the whole phenomenal world is stirred into action and reaction. The living entities are given full facility to lord it over material Nature, but the ultimate

controller is the Lord Himself in His plenary feature of Paramãtman, the Supersoul, which is one of the Puruṣas.

Therefore, there is a gulf of difference between the living entity known as ãtman, and the controlling Lord, known as Paramãtman—the soul and the Supersoul. Paramãtman is the controller, and ãtman is controlled; therefore they cannot be on the same level. The Paramãtman fully cooperates with the ãtman, and thus He is known as the constant companion of the living being. This all-pervading feature of the Lord, Which exists in all circumstances of waking and sleeping, and also in potential states, and from Which the jīva-śakti (living force) is generated —as both the conditioned and the liberated souls—is known as Brahman. Thus the Lord is the Origin of both Paramãtman and Brahman, and therefore He is the Origin of all living entities, and all else that exists.

One who knows this engages himself at once in the devotional service of the Lord. Such a pure and fully cognizant devotee of the Lord is fully attached to Him in heart and soul, and whenever such a devotee assembles with similar devotees, they have no other engagement but to glorify the Lord in terms of His transcendental activities. Those who are not as perfect as the pure devotees, those who have realized only the Brahman feature or the Paramãtman feature of the Lord, cannot appreciate the activities of such perfect devotees. But the Lord always helps such pure devotees by supplying necessary knowledge within their hearts, and by His special favor He dissipates all the

darkness of ignorance. This the philosophers and yogis cannot imagine, because they more or less depend on their own strength.

As is stated in the Katha Upaniṣad, the Lord can be known only to those whom He favors, and not to anyone else. And such special favors are bestowed upon His pure devotees only. Śrī Īśopaniṣad here indicates such favor of the Lord, beyond the purview of the Brahma-jyoti.

## 17

*vāyur anilam amṛtam*
*athedaṁ bhasmāntaṁ śarīram*
*oṁ krato smara kṛtaṁ smara*
*krato smara kṛtaṁ smara*

### SYNONYMS

*vāyuḥ*—air of life; *anilam*—total reservoir of air; *amṛtam*—indestructible; *atha*—now; *idam*—this; *bhasmāntam*—after being turned to ashes; *śarīram*—body; *oṁ*—O Lord; *krato*—O enjoyer of all sacrifices; *smara*—please remember; *kṛtam*—all that has been done by me; *smara*—please remember; *krato*—O supreme beneficiary; *smara*—please remember; *kṛtam*—all that I have done for You; *smara*—please remember.

### TRANSLATION

**Let this temporary body be burnt into ashes, and let the air of life be merged with the totality of air. Now, O my Lord, please remember all my sacrifices, and because You are the ultimate Beneficiary, please remember all that I have done for You.**

### PURPORT

This temporary material body is certainly a foreign dress. In the Bhagavad-gītā it is clearly said that after the destruction of the

material body, the living entity is not annihilated, nor does he lose his identity. The identity of the living entity is never, therefore, impersonal or without form; but on the contrary, it is the material dress which is formless, and which takes a shape according to the form of the indestructible person. No living entity is originally formless, as is wrongly supposed by persons with a poor fund of knowledge. Here also in Mantra Seventeen of Śrī Īśopaniṣad, the principle is supported that the living entity exists after the annihilation of the material body. In the material world there is wonderful workmanship by material Nature in the matter of creating different varieties of bodies for the living beings, in terms of their propensities for sense gratification.

The one who wanted to taste stool is given a material body which is quite suitable for eating stool —that of a hog. Similarly, the tiger has such a body that it can live by enjoying the blood of other animals, and by eating their flesh. The human being is not meant for eating stool or flesh, because the shape of the teeth is different. Nor does he have any desire to taste stool, even in the most aboriginal state of life. Human teeth are so made that they can chew and cut fruit and vegetables, with two canine teeth so that one can eat flesh also. The material bodies of all animals and men are foreign to the living entity, and change according to the desire of the being for sense gratification.

In this cycle of evolution one changes bodies one after another: from aquatic life—when the world was full of water—to vegetable life, from vegetable life to worm life, from worm life to

bird life, from bird life to animal life, and from animal life to the human form. The highest development of life is this human form when it is possessed of a full sense of spiritual knowledge, and the highest development of spiritual sense is described in this mantra of the Veda: one should give up this material body to be turned into ashes, and allow the living air to merge into the eternal reservoir of air. The living being's activities are performed within the body by movements of different kinds of air, and this is called, in sum, the prāṇa-vãyu.

The yogis generally study to control the airs of the body, and the soul is supposed to rise up from one circle of air to another till it rises onto the brahma-randhra, or highest circle of air. Then the perfect yogi can transfer himself to any planet he likes. The process is give up body and then enter into another body, and the highest perfection of such a bodily change is possible when the living entity is able to give up this material body altogether, as is suggested in this mantra. He may then enter into the spiritual atmosphere, where he develops a completely different quality of body—a spiritual body—which never has to meet death or change. Here in the material world one has to change his body, forced by material Nature on account of his different desires for sense gratification.

These desires are represented in the various species of life, from the germs to the most perfect material bodies, those of Brahmã and the demigods. All of these have bodies of matter in different shapes, and the intelligent person sees oneness not in

the variety of bodies, but in the spiritual identity. The spiritual spark which is the part and parcel of the Supreme Lord is the same either in the body of a hog or in the body of a demigod. There are different bodies according to the pious and vicious activities of the living entity. The human body is highly developed, with full consciousness of the constitution of the body; and the most perfect man, according to the Vedic scriptures, surrenders unto the Lord after many, many births of culturing knowledge.

The culture of knowledge reaches perfection only when the knower comes to the point of surrendering unto the Supreme Lord, called Vãsudeva. But even after attaining knowledge in the matter of one's spiritual identity, unless he comes to the point of knowing that the living entities are eternal parts and parcels of the Whole, and that they can never become the Whole, one has to fall down again into the material atmosphere, even after having become one with the Brahma-jyoti. The Brahma-jyoti emanating from the transcendental body of the Lord is full of spiritual sparks. The spiritual sparks being individual identities with the full sense of existence, sometimes desire to become the enjoyers of the senses, and thus they are given places in the material world to become false lords, under the dictation of the senses.

This sense of over- lordship is the material disease of the living being, and under the spell of such sense enjoyment he transmigrates through the different shapes of body manifested in the material world. The sense of becoming one with the Brahma-

jyoti is not, therefore, mature knowledge. The sense of surrendering unto the Lord completely, and developing the sense of spiritual service is the highest perfectional stage. In this mantra the living entity prays to enter into the spiritual Kingdom of God after relinquishing the material body and the material air. The devotee prays to the Lord to remember his activities and the sacrifices he has performed, now before his material body is turned into ashes. This prayer is made at the time of death, with full consciousness of his past deeds and of the ultimate goal.

One who is completely under the rules of material law remembers the heinous activities performed during the existence of his material body, and therefore he gets another material body after death. The Bhagavad-gītā confirms this truth. It states that at the time of death, the mind carries with it the propensities of the dying animal, and the next life is obtained in terms of that mental state. Unlike the simple animals, who have no developed mind, the human being can remember the activities of his passing life like dreams at night, and therefore his mind remains surcharged with material desires, and he cannot enter into the spiritual kingdom with a spiritual body. The devotees, however, by practice of devotional service to the Lord, develop a sense of love for Godhead.

And even if at the time of death a devotee does not remember his godly service, the Lord does not forget him. This prayer is to remind the Lord about the devotee's sacrifices, but even if there is no reminder, the Lord does not forget the devotional service of

the pure devotee. The Lord clearly describes His intimate relationship with His devotees in the Gītā. Srila Bhaktivinode Thākur explains the Gītā's verses in this connection: One should accept a devotee who is on the right path of the saints, even though such a devotee may seem of loose character. One should try to understand the real import of the words "loose character." A conditioned soul has to act in double functions, namely one for the maintenance of the body, and again for self realization.

Social status, mental development, cleanliness, austerity, nourishment and the struggle for existence, are all for the maintenance of the body. And the self realization part of his activities is executed in his occupation as a devotee of the Lord, and he performs action in that connection also. These two different functions go along parallel lines because a conditioned soul cannot give up the maintenance of the body. The proportion of activities for maintenance of the body decreases, however, in proportion to the increase in devotional service. And as long as the proportion of devotional service does not come to the right point, there is a chance for an occasional exhibition of worldliness. But it should be noted that such worldliness cannot continue for any length of time because, by the grace of the Lord, such imperfections will come to an end very shortly.

Therefore, the path of devotional service is the only right path. Being on the right path, even an occasional occurrence of worldliness does not hamper one in the advancement of self realization. And, in the Gītā Itself, Kṛṣṇa says: One who is

engaged in devotional service, despite the most abominable action, is to be considered saintly because he is rightly situated. Very shortly does he become righteous, and attain to lasting peace. O son of Kuntī, it is My promise that My devotee will never perish. O son of Pṛthã, anyone who will take shelter in Me, whether a woman or a merchant or born in a low family, can yet approach the Supreme Destination. How much greater then are the Brãhmanas, the righteous, the devotees and saintly kings!

In this miserable world, these are fixed in devotional service to the Lord. Engage in My service, and surrender unto Me. Completely absorbed in Me, surely will you come to Me. (Gītā, IX/30-34) Such facilities of devotional service are denied the impersonalists because they are attached to the Brahma-jyoti feature of the Lord. They can neither penetrate the Brahma-jyoti, as is suggested in the previous mantras, nor do they believe in the Personality of Godhead. Their business is mostly concerned with semantics, the jugglery of words of mental creation. As such the impersonalists pursue fruitless labor, as is confirmed in the Bhagavad-gītā in the Twelfth Chapter. All the facilities suggested in this of Śrī Īśopaniṣad can easily be obtained by constant contact with the Personal feature of the Absolute Truth.

Devotional service to the Lord consists essentially of nine transcendental activities on the part of the devotee: 1. hearing about the Lord, 2. glorifying the Lord, 3. remembering the Lord, 4. serving the Lotus Feet of the Lord, 5. worshiping the Lord, 6. offering prayers to the Lord, 7. serving the Lord, 8. friendly

association with the Lord, 9. surrendering everything unto the Lord. These nine principles of devotional service, either in sum total or one by one, can help the devotee to be constantly in touch with God, and therefore at the end of life it is easy for the devotee to remember the Lord. By adopting only one of these nine principles it was possible for the following renowned devotees of the Lord to achieve the highest perfection: 1.

By hearing only, Mahãrãj Parīkṣit, the hero of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, achieved the desired result. 2. Just by glorifying the Lord, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the speaker of Śrīmad- Bhāgavatam, achieved his perfection. 3. By praying, Akrūra achieved the desired result. 4. By remembering, Prahlãda Mahãrãj achieved the desired result. 5. By worshiping, Pṛthu Mahãrãj achieved perfection. 6. By serving the Lotus Feet of the Lord, the Goddess of Fortune, Lakṣmī, achieved perfection. 7. By personal service to the Lord, Hanumān achieved the desired result. 8. By friendship, Arjuna achieved the result. 9. By surrendering everything that he had, Mahãrãj Bali achieved the desired result. Actually, the explanation of this mantra and of practically all the mantras of the Vedic hymns is summarized in the Vedānta-sūtras; and then again they are properly explained in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the mature fruit of the Vedic tree of wisdom. In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam this particular mantra is explained in the questions and answers of Mahãrãj Parīkṣit and Śukadeva Gosvāmī at the very beginning of their meeting. As hearing and chanting of the science of God is the basic principle

of devotional life, so the complete Bhāgavatam is heard by Mahārāj Parīkṣit and chanted by Gosvāmī Śukadeva. Mahārāj Parīkṣit enquired from Śukadeva because Śukadeva was a greater spiritual master than any great yogi or transcendentalist of his time. Mahārāj Parīkṣit's question was, "What is the duty of every man, specifically at the time of death?" The answer by Gosvāmī Śukadeva was that everyone who is desirous of being free from all anxieties should always hear about and glorify the Personality of Godhead, Who is the Supreme Director of everything, the Extinguisher of all difficulties, and the Supersoul of all living entities.

So-called human society is generally engaged at night in the matter of sleeping or sex indulgence. And during the daytime men are engaged in earning money as much as possible, or else in shopping for the family maintenance. People have very little time to talk about the Personality of Godhead or to make any enquiries about Him. They have dismissed the case of God's existence in so many ways, especially by declaring Him to be impersonal—that is, without any sense perception. But in the Vedic literature, whether the Upaniṣads or the Vedānta-sūtras or the Bhagavad-gītā or the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, in every scripture it is declared that the Lord is the sentient Being, supreme over all other living entities. And His glorious activities are identical with Himself.

One should therefore not indulge in hearing and speaking of the rubbish activities of worldly politicians and the so-called big

men of society, but should so mold his life that not a second is wasted without engagement in godly activities. Śrī Īśopaniṣad directs us towards such activities. Unless one is accustomed to this devotional practice, what will he remember at the time of death when the body is dislocated, and how can he pray to the Almighty Lord to remember his sacrifices? Sacrifice means sacrificing the interest of the senses. One has to learn this art by employing the senses in the service of the Lord during one's lifetime, so that one can utilize the result at the time of death.

# 18

*agne naya supathā rāye asmān*
*viśvāni deva vayunāni vidvān*
*yuyodhy asmaj juhurāṇam eno*
*bhūyiṣṭhāṁ te nama-uktiṁ vidhema*

## SYNONYMS

*agne*—O my Lord, as powerful as fire; *naya*—kindly lead; *supathā*—by the right path; *rāye*—for reaching You; *asmān*—us; *viśvāni*—all; *deva*—O my Lord; *vayunāni*—actions; *vidvān*—the knower; *yuyodhi*—kindly remove; *asmat*—from us; *juhurāṇam*—all hindrances on the path; *enaḥ*—all vices; *bhūyiṣṭhām*—most numerous; *te*—unto You; *namaḥ uktim*—words of obeisance; *vidhema*—I do.

## TRANSLATION

**O my Lord, powerful as the fire, Omnipotent One, now I do offer You all obeisances, falling at Your Feet on the ground. O my Lord, please lead me on the right path to reach You, and, as You know all of what I have done in the past, please make me free from the reactions to my past sins, so that there will be no hindrance to my progress.**

## PURPORT

This surrendering process and praying for the causeless mercy of the Lord leads the devotee progressively on the path of complete self realization. The Lord is addressed as the fire because He can burn anything into ashes—including the sins of the surrendered soul. As described in the previous mantras, the real or ultimate aspect of the Absolute is His feature as the Personality of Godhead. His impersonal feature of the Brahma-jyoti is a dazzling covering over the face of the Lord. Fruitive activities, or the karma-kāṇḍa path of self realization, is the lowest stage in this endeavor. As soon as such activities become even slightly deviated from the regulative principles of the Vedas, such activities are transformed into vikarma, or acts against the interest of the actor.

Such vikarma is enacted by the illusioned living entities simply for sense gratification, and thus such activities become hindrances on the path of self realization. Self realization is possible for the human form of life, but not for other forms. There are 8,400,000 species or forms of life—of which the human form, with the qualifications of Brahminical culture, presents the only chance to obtain knowledge of the Transcendence. Brahminical culture means truthfulness, controlling the senses, forbearance, simplicity, full knowledge, full faith in God—and not to become simply proud of one's high parentage. To be the son of a Brãhmana is a chance to become a Brãhmana, just as being the son of a big man is a chance to become a big man.

But such a birthright is not everything, because one still has to attain the Brahminical qualifications for himself. As soon as one becomes proud of his birth as the son of a Brãhmana and neglects to acquire the qualifications of a real Brãhmana, he at once becomes degraded and drawn from the path of self realization, and his life-mission as a human being is defeated. In the Bhagavad-gītā it is assured us by the Lord that the yoga-bhraṣṭas, or souls fallen from the path of self realization, are given a chance for rectification by taking birth either in the families of good Brãhmanas or in the families of rich merchants. These are the higher chances for self realization: to become a rich man's son, or to become the son of a good Brãhmana.

And if these chances are misused by the illusioned human being, the result is that such a man loses the good chance of human life offered by the Almighty Lord. The regulative principles are such that one who follows them is promoted from the plane of fruitive activities to the plane of transcendental knowledge, and from transcendental knowledge he becomes perfect, after many, many births, when he surrenders unto the Lord. This is the general procedure. But one who surrenders at the very beginning, as is mentioned in this mantra, at once surpasses all the stages of progression by simple adoption of the devotional attitude. As is stated in the Gītā, the Lord at once takes charge of such a surrendered soul and makes him free from all the reactions to his sinful acts.

In the karma- kāṇḍa activities there are many sinful actions, and in jñāna-kāṇḍa, the path of philosophical development, the number of such actions is less. But in devotional service to the Lord, the path of bhakti, there is practically no chance of sinful reactions. One who is a devotee of the Lord attains all the good qualifications of the Lord Himself, not to mention becoming a Brãhmana. A devotee automatically attains the qualifications of an expert Brãhmana authorized to perform sacrifices, even though such a devotee may not have taken his birth in the family of a Brãhmana. Such is the omnipotence of the Lord that He can make a man born in the family of a Brãhmana as degraded as a lowborn dog-eater, and He can also make a lowborn dog-eater more than a qualified Brãhmana, simply on the strength of devotional service.

The omnipotent Lord, being situated within the heart of everyone, can give directions to His sincere devotee as to the right path. Such directions are especially offered to the devotee, even if he desires something else. For others God gives sanction to the doer only at the risk of the doer, but in the case of a devotee the Lord directs him in such a way that he never acts wrongly. In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam it is said that the Lord is so kind upon His devotee that even though he sometimes falls into the entanglement of vikarma—acts against the directions of the Vedas—the Lord at once rectifies the mistakes of the devotee from within his heart, because such devotees are very dear to the Lord.

Here in this mantra the devotee prays to the Lord to rectify him from within his heart. To err is human: A conditioned soul is very often apt to commit mistakes, and the only remedial measure for such unknown sins is to give oneself up to the Lotus Feet of the Lord, so that He may guide the devotee. The Lord takes this charge for the fully surrendered souls, and thus all problems are solved simply by surrendering oneself unto the Lord and acting in terms of the Lord's directions. Such directions are given to the sincere devotee in two ways. One is by means of the saints, scriptures, and spiritual master, and the other is by the Lord Himself, residing within the heart of everyone.

Thus the devotee is protected in all respects. The Vedic knowledge is transcendental and it cannot be understood simply by mundane educational procedures. One can understand the Vedic mantras only by the grace of the Lord and the spiritual master. If one takes shelter of a bona fide spiritual master, it is to be understood that he has obtained the grace of the Lord. The Lord appears as the spiritual master for the devotee. And so the spiritual master, the Vedic injunctions, and the Lord Himself from within all guide the devotee in full strength, and there is no chance of such a devotee falling again into the mire of material illusion. The devotee, thus protected all around, is sure to reach the ultimate destination of perfection.

The whole process is hinted at in this mantra of Śrī Īśopaniṣad, and the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam still further explains this. Hearing and chanting of the glories of the Lord are

themselves acts of piety. The Lord wants everyone to do this, because He is the Well-wisher of all living entities. And by practicing this hearing and chanting of the glories of the Lord, one becomes cleansed of all undesirable things within himself. His devotion becomes fixed upon the Lord. At this stage the devotee acquires the Brahminical qualifications, and the resultant reactions of lower qualities become completely vanished. He becomes fully enlightened by such devotional service and thus knows the path of the Lord and how to attain Him. All doubts become diminished, and he becomes a pure devotee. Thus end the Bhaktivedãnta Purports to Śrī Īśopaniṣad, the knowledge that brings one nearer to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa.

# Īśo Introduction

(Teachings of the Vedas) [Delivered as a lecture by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda on October 6, 1969, at Conway Hall, London, England.] Ladies and gentlemen, today's subject matter is the teachings of the Vedas. What are the Vedas? The Sanskrit verbal root of Veda can be interpreted variously, but the purpose is finally one. Veda means knowledge. Any knowledge you accept is Veda, for the teachings of the Vedas are the original knowledge. In the conditioned state, our knowledge is subjected to so many deficiencies. The difference between a conditioned soul and a liberated soul is that the conditioned soul has four kinds of defects. The first defect is that he must commit mistakes. For example, in our country, Mahātmā Gandhi was considered to be a very great personality, but he committed many mistakes.

Even at the last stage of his life, his assistant warned, "Mahātmā Gandhi, don't go to the New Delhi meeting. I have some friends and I have heard there is danger." But he did not hear. He persisted on going and was killed. Even great personalities like Mahātmā Gandhi, President Kennedy—there are so many of them— make mistakes. To err is human. This is one defect of the conditioned soul. Another defect: to be illusioned. Illusion means to accept something which is not: māyā. Māyā means what is not. Everyone is accepting the body as the self. If I ask you what you are, you will say, "I am Mr. John; I am a rich man; I am this, I am that." All these are bodily identifications.

But you are not this body. This is illusion. The third defect is the cheating propensity. Everyone has the propensity to cheat others. Although a person is fool number one, he poses himself as very intelligent. Although it is already pointed out that he is in illusion and makes mistakes, he will theorize: "I think this is this, this is this." But he does not even know his own position. He writes books of philosophy, although he is defective. That is his disease. That is cheating. Lastly, our senses are imperfect. We are very proud of our eyes. Often, someone will challenge, "Can you show me God?" But do you have the eyes to see God? You will never see if you haven't the eyes.

If immediately the room becomes dark, you cannot even see your hands. So what power do you have to see? We cannot, therefore, expect knowledge (Vedas) with these imperfect senses. With all these deficiencies, in conditioned life, we cannot give perfect knowledge to anyone. Nor are we ourselves perfect. Therefore we accept the Vedas as they are. You may call the Vedas Hindu, but Hindu is a foreign name. We are not Hindus. Our real identification is varṇāśrama. Varṇāśrama denotes the followers of the Vedas, those who accept the human society in eight divisions of varṇa and āśrama. There are four divisions of society and four divisions of spiritual life. This is called varṇāśrama. It is stated in the Bhagavad-gītā, "These divisions are everywhere, because they are created by God." The divisions of society are brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya, śūdra.

Brāhmaṇa refers to the very intelligent class of men, those who know what is Brahman. Similarly, the kṣatriyas, the administrator group, are the next intelligent class of men. Then the vaiśyas, the mercantile group. These natural classifications are found everywhere. This is the Vedic principle, and we accept it. Vedic principles are accepted as an axiomatic truth, for there cannot be any mistake. That is acceptance. For instance, in India, cow dung is accepted as pure, and yet cow dung is the stool of an animal. In one place you'll find the Vedic injunction that if you touch stool, you have to take a bath immediately. But in another place it is said that the stool of a cow is pure.

If you smear cow dung in an impure place that place becomes pure. With our ordinary sense we can argue, "This is contradictory." Actually, it is contradictory from the ordinary point of view, but it is not false. It is fact. In Calcutta, a very prominent scientist and doctor analyzed cow dung and found that it contains all antiseptic properties. In India if one person tells another, "You must do this," the other party may say, "What do you mean? Is this a Vedic injunction that I have to follow you without any argument?" Vedic injunctions cannot be interpreted. But ultimately, if you carefully study why these injunctions are there, you will find that they are all correct. The Vedas are not compilations of human knowledge.

Vedic knowledge comes from the Spiritual World, from Lord Kṛṣṇa. Another name for the Vedas is śruti. Śruti refers to that knowledge which is acquired by hearing. It is not experimental

knowledge. Śruti is considered to be like a mother. We take so much knowledge from our mother. For example, if you want to know who your father is, who can answer you? Your mother. If the mother says, "Here is your father," you have to accept it. It is not possible to experiment to find out whether he is your father. Similarly, if you want to know something beyond your experience, beyond your experimental knowledge, beyond the activities of the senses, then you have to accept the Vedas. There is no question of experimenting.

It has already been experimented. It is already settled. The version of the mother, for instance, has to be accepted as truth. There is no other way. The Vedas are considered to be the mother and Brahmā is called the grandfather, the forefather, because he was the first to be instructed in the Vedic knowledge. In the beginning the first living creature was Brahmā. He received this Vedic knowledge and imparted it to Nārada and other disciples and sons, and they also distributed it to their disciples. In this way, the Vedic knowledge comes down by disciplic succession. It is also confirmed in the Bhagavad-gītā, that Vedic knowledge is understood in this way. If you make experimental endeavor, you come to the same conclusion, but just to save time you should accept.

If you want to know who your father is and if you accept your mother as authority, then whatever she says can be accepted without argument. There are three kinds of evidences: pratyakṣa, anumāna and śabda. Pratyakṣa means direct. Direct evidence is

not so good because our senses are not perfect. We are seeing the sun daily, and it appears to us just like a small disc, but it is actually far, far larger than many planets. Of what value is this seeing? Therefore we have to read books, then we can understand about the sun. So direct experience is not perfect. Then there is inductive knowledge: "It may be like this," hypothesis. For instance, Darwin's theory says it may be like this, it may be like that, but that is not science.

That is a suggestion, and it is also not perfect. But if you receive the knowledge from the authoritative sources, that is perfect. If you receive a program guide from the radio station authorities, you accept it. You don't deny it; you don't have to make an experiment because it is received from the authoritative sources. Vedic knowledge is called śabda-pramāṇa. Another name is śruti. Śruti means that this knowledge has to be received simply by aural reception. The Vedas instruct that in order to understand transcendental knowledge we have to hear from the authority. Transcendental knowledge is knowledge from beyond this universe. Within this universe is material knowledge, and beyond this universe is transcendental knowledge. We cannot even go to the end of the universe, so how can we go to the Spiritual World?

Thus to acquire full knowledge is impossible. There is a Spiritual Sky. There is another nature that is beyond manifestation and non- manifestation. But how will you know that there is a sky where the planets and inhabitants are eternal? All this

knowledge is there, but how will you make experiments? It is not possible. Therefore you have to take the assistance of the Vedas. This is called Vedic knowledge. In our Kṛṣṇa Consciousness Movement, we are accepting knowledge from the highest authority, Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is accepted as the highest authority by all classes of men. I am speaking first of the two classes of transcendentalists. One class of transcendentalist is called impersonalist, Māyā-vādī. They are generally known as Vedāntists, led by Śaṅkarācārya.

And there is another class of transcendentalist, called Vaiṣṇavas, like Rāmānujācārya, Madhvācārya, Viṣṇusvāmī. Both the Śaṅkara-sampradāya and the Vaiṣṇava-sampradāya have accepted Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Śaṅkarācārya is supposed to be an impersonalist who preached impersonalism, impersonal Brahman, but it is a fact that he is a covered personalist. In his commentary on the Bhagavad-gītā he wrote, "Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is beyond this cosmic manifestation." And then again he confirms, "That Supreme Personality of Godhead, Nārāyaṇa, is Kṛṣṇa. He has come as the son of Devakī and Vasudeva." He has particularly mentioned the names of His father and mother. So Kṛṣṇa is accepted as the Supreme Personality of Godhead by all transcendentalists. There is no doubt about it.

Our source of knowledge in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is directly from Kṛṣṇa, Bhagavadgītā. We have published Bhagavad-gītā As It Is, because we accept Kṛṣṇa as He is speaking without any

interpretation. That is Vedic knowledge. Since the Vedic knowledge is pure, we accept it. Whatever Kṛṣṇa says, we accept. This is Kṛṣṇa Consciousness. That saves much time. If you accept the right authority or the source of knowledge, then you save much time. For example, there are two systems of knowledge in the material world, inductive and deductive. From deductive, you accept that man is mortal. Your father says man is mortal, your sister says man is mortal, everyone says man is mortal—but you do not experiment. You accept it as fact that man is mortal.

If you want to research to find out whether man is mortal, you have to study each and every man, and you may come to think that there may be some man who is not dying, but you have not seen him yet. So in this way your research will never be finished. This process is called in Sanskrit, āroha, the ascending process. If you want to attain knowledge by any personal endeavor, by exercising your imperfect senses, you will never come to the right conclusions. That is not possible. There is a statement in the Brahma-saṁhitā: Just ride on the airplane which runs at the speed of mind. Our material airplanes can run 2,000 miles per hour, but what is the speed of mind?

You are sitting at home, you immediately think of India, say 10,000 miles away, and at once it is in your home. Your mind has gone there. The mindspeed is so swift. Therefore it is stated, "If you travel at this speed for millions of years, you'll find that the Spiritual Sky is unlimited." It is not possible even to approach it. Therefore, the Vedic injunction is that one must approach—the

word "compulsory" is used—a bona fide spiritual master, a guru. And what is the qualification of a spiritual master? He has rightly heard the Vedic message from the right source. Otherwise he is not bona fide. He must practically be firmly established in Brahman. These are the two qualities.

This Kṛṣṇa Consciousness movement is completely authorized from Vedic principles. In the Bhagavad-gītā Kṛṣṇa says, "The actual aim of Vedic research is to find out Kṛṣṇa." In the Brahma-saṁhitā it is also stated, "Kṛṣṇa, Govinda, has innumerable Forms, but they are all one." They are not like our forms, which are fallible. His Form is infallible. My form has a beginning, but His Form has no beginning. It is ananta. And His Form—so many multiforms—has no end. My form is sitting here and not in my apartment. You are sitting there and not in your apartment. But Kṛṣṇa can be everywhere at one time. He can sit down in Goloka Vṛndāvana and at the same time He is everywhere, all-pervading.

He is Original, the Oldest, but whenever you look at a picture of Kṛṣṇa you'll find a young Boy of 15-20 years old. You will never find an old man. You have seen pictures of Kṛṣṇa as a charioteer from the Bhagavad-gītā. At that time He was not less than 100 years old. He had greatgrandchildren, but He looked just like a boy. Kṛṣṇa, God, never becomes old. That is His Supreme power. And if you want to search out Kṛṣṇa by studying the Vedic literature, then you will be baffled. It may be possible, but it is very difficult. But you can very easily learn about Him from His

devotee. His devotee can deliver Him to you: "Here He is, take Him." That is the potency of Kṛṣṇa's devotees.

Originally there was only one Veda, and there was no necessity of reading it. People were so intelligent and had such sharp memories that by once hearing from the lips of the spiritual master they would understand. They would immediately grasp the whole purport. But 5,000 years ago Vyāsadeva put the Vedas in writing for the people in this age, Kali-yuga. He knew that eventually the people would be short-lived, their memories would be very poor and their intelligence would not be very sharp. "Therefore, let me teach this Vedic knowledge in writing." He divided the Vedas into four: Ṛg, Sāma, Atharva and Yajur. Then he gave the charge of these Vedas to his different disciples. He then thought of the less intelligent class of men, strī, śūdra and dvija-bandhu.

He considered the woman class and śūdra class (worker class) and dvijabandhu. Dvija-bandhu refers to those who are born in a high family but who are not properly qualified. A man born in the family of a brāhmaṇa, who is not qualified as a brāhmaṇa is called dvija-bandhu. For these persons, he compiled Mahābhārata, called the history of India, and the eighteen Purāṇas. These are all Vedic literatures: the Purāṇas, the Mahābhārata, the four Vedas and the Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣads are part of the Vedas. Then Vyāsadeva summarized all Vedic knowledge for scholars and philosophers in what is called the Vedānta-sūtra. This is the last word of the Vedas. Vyāsadeva

personally wrote Vedānta- sūtra under the instructions of Nārada, his Guru Mahārāj, spiritual master, but still he was not satisfied.

That is a long story, described in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Vedavyāsa was not very satisfied even after compiling many Purāṇas, Upaniṣads, and even after Vedānta-sūtra. Then his spiritual master, Nārada, instructed him, "You explain Vedānta." Vedānta means Ultimate Knowledge, and the Ultimate Knowledge is Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa says that throughout all the Vedas one has to understand Kṛṣṇa. Vedānta-kṛd, veda-vid eva cāham. Kṛṣṇa says, "I am the compiler of Vedānta, and I am the Knower of the Vedas." Therefore the Ultimate Objective is Kṛṣṇa. That is explained in all the Vaiṣṇava commentaries on Vedānta philosophy. We Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas have our commentary on Vedānta philosophy, called Govinda-bhāṣya by Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa. Similarly, Rāmānujācārya has a commentary and Madhvācārya has one. The version of Śaṅkarācārya is not the only commentary.

There are many Vedānta commentaries, but because the Vaiṣṇavas did not present the first Vedānta commentary, people are under the wrong impression that Śaṅkarācārya's is the only Vedānta commentary. Besides that, Vyāsadeva himself wrote the perfect Vedānta commentary, Śrīmad- Bhāgavatam. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam also begins with the first words of the Vedānta-sūtra: janmādyasya yataḥ. And that janmādyasya yataḥ is fully explained in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. The Vedānta-sūtra simply

hints at what is Brahman, the Absolute Truth: "The Absolute Truth is that from Whom everything emanates." This is a summary, but it is explained in detail in Śrīmad- Bhāgavatam. If everything is emanating from the Absolute Truth, then what is the nature of the Absolute Truth? That is explained in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. The Absolute Truth must be conscious.

Svarāṭ. He is Self-effulgent. We develop our consciousness and knowledge by receiving knowledge from others, but for Him it is said that He is Self-effulgent. The whole summary of Vedic knowledge is the Vedānta-sūtra, and the Vedānta-sūtra is explained by the writer himself in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. We finally request those who are actually after Vedic knowledge to try to understand the explanation of all Vedic knowledge from the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and the Bhagavadgītā.

## oṁ

*oṁ pūrṇam adaḥ pūrṇam idaṁ*
*pūrṇāt pūrṇam udacyate*
*pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya*
*pūrṇam evāvaśiṣyate*

### SYNONYMS

*oṁ*—the Complete Whole; *pūrṇam*—perfectly complete; *adaḥ*—that; *pūrṇam*—perfectly complete; *idam*—this phenomenal world; *pūrṇāt*—from the all-perfect; *pūrṇam*—complete unit; *udacyate*—is produced; *pūrṇasya*—of the Complete Whole; *pūrṇam*—completely, all; *ādāya*—having been taken away; *pūrṇam*—the complete balance; *eva*—even; *avaśiṣyate*—is remaining.

### TRANSLATION

**The Personality of Godhead is perfect and complete. And because He is completely perfect, all emanations from Him, such as this phenomenal world, are perfectly equipped as a complete whole. Whatever is produced of the Complete Whole is also complete by itself. And because He is the Complete Whole, even though so many complete units emanate from Him, He remains the complete balance.**

## PURPORT

The Complete Whole, or the Supreme Absolute Truth, is the complete Personality of Godhead. Impersonal Brahman forms an incomplete realization of the Absolute Complete, and so also does the conception of Paramātmān, the Supersoul. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha: impersonal Brahman realization is the realization of His sat, or eternity aspect, and Paramātmān, Supersoul realization, is the realization of His sat and cit, eternity and knowledge aspects. But realization of the Personality of Godhead is realization of all the transcendental features, sat, cit and ānanda, or bliss. In the Personal concept, this is realized in complete form (vigraha). And so the Complete Whole is not formless. If He is formless, or if He is less than His creation in any other thing, He cannot be complete.

The Complete Whole must have everything, both within our experience and beyond our experience. Otherwise He cannot be complete. The Complete Whole Personality of Godhead has immense potencies, and all of them are as complete as He is. Therefore this phenomenal or material world is also complete by itself. The twenty-four elements of which this material universe is a temporary manifestation are completely adjusted to produce complete things necessary for the maintenance and subsistence of this universe. No extraneous effort by any other unit is required for this maintenance. The universe has its own time, fixed by the energy of the Complete Whole, and when that time is

complete this temporary manifestation will be annihilated by the complete arrangement of the Complete.

There is complete facility for the small complete units, namely the living beings, to realize the Complete; and all forms of incompleteness are experienced only on account of incomplete knowledge of the Complete. The human form of life is a complete manifestation of the consciousness of the living being, which is obtained after evolving through 8,400,000 species of life in the cycle of birth and death. If a human being does not realize his completeness within the Complete in this life full of consciousness, he loses the chance of realizing, and is put again into the cycle of evolution by the law of material Nature. Because we do not know that there is a complete arrangement in Nature for our maintenance, we make efforts to utilize the resources of Nature to create a so-called complete life of sense enjoyment.

This misleading life of sense enjoyment is called illusion, because the living entity cannot enjoy the life of the senses without being dovetailed with the Complete Whole. For example, the hand of a body is a complete unit as long as it is attached to the complete body. When the hand is detached from the body, it may appear like a hand, but actually it has none of the potency of a hand. Similarly, living beings are parts and parcels of the Complete Whole; and as long as the parts and parcels are detached from the Complete Whole, the illusory representation of completeness is not enough to bring the desired result. The

completeness of human life can only be realized when the human form of life is engaged in the service of the Complete Whole.

Any service in this world, whether social, political, communal, international or even interplanetary, will remain incomplete unless and until it is dovetailed with the Complete Whole. And, when everything is dovetailed with the Complete Whole, the attached parts and parcels also become complete in themselves.